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World War II magazine



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Allied troops rehearse for D-Day in January 1944.

Cover: An anguished GI on Omaha Beach crouches over the body of a fallen man in this photo by Walter Rosenblum.



CURATOLA



SYMONDS



ZABECKI



MORRIS



McMANUS

John M. Curatola ("Fog of War") is an associate professor of history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. In 2009, he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after serving 22 years in the Marine Corps. He is currently writing a book examining post-World War II strategic bombing concepts. Despite his Marine pedigree, he considers himself "a frustrated B-17 pilot."

John C. McManus ("A Knife in the Vitals") is a full professor of U.S. Military History at Missouri University of Science and Technology. A frequent expert commentator for documentaries, he is the author of 11 books on American military history. His latest book, *The Dead and Those About to Die* (NAL/Caliber 2014), tells the story of the 1st Infantry Division on D-Day.

Rob Morris ("Time Travel") has worked as a reporter and editor for 30 years. He is the co-owner and editor of *The Outer Banks Voice*, a local news website on the northeastern coast of North Carolina. His connections to the navy are indirect but

numerous. His late father was skipper of a PT boat in the Pacific, his father-in-law was a navy pilot, and his two brothers-in-law were navy officers.

Craig L. Symonds ("Exercise in Tragedy") is professor of history emeritus at the U.S. Naval Academy. Symonds is the author or editor of 25 books, including a book on the Battle of Midway published in 2011. His newest book, *Neptune: The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings*, will be released in May 2014. He and his wife Marylou live in Annapolis, Maryland; they have one son and two grandchildren.

David T. Zabecki ("Overlooked Overseer"), Weider History Group's Chief Military Historian, retired from the U.S. Army in 2007 as a Major General. In 2004 he commanded all the U.S. troops tasked to support the D-Day 60th anniversary commemoration ceremonies in Normandy. He is the editor of the four-volume encyclopedia *Germany at War: 400 Years of Military History*, scheduled for publication later this year by ABC-CLIO.



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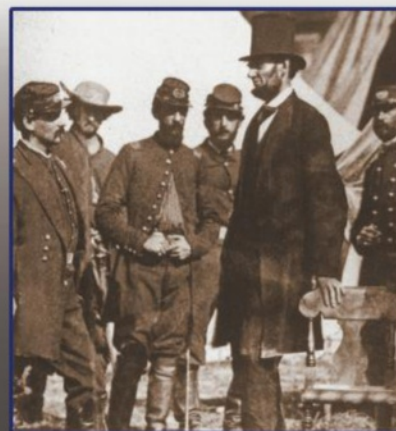
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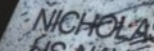
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NICHOLAS A DEMARIA
US NAVY 1943 - 1946
LOVED AND MISSED

The National WWII Museum reserves the right to refuse to engrave any message or material that it determines to be inappropriate, such as telephone numbers, political messages and suggestive wording.



J.M. McElfresh and his dog on PT Base 17 in the Philippines. McElfresh captained PT 490, below.



radar. One of our navigational fixes was a rock a few hundred yards off shore below Palompon. The radar operator reported it. A few minutes later he reported another rock. There was only one rock. We decided to attack whatever it was, mufflers on, dead slow. There was the rock. Off we went to see what the other rock was. Same procedure, destroyer Uzuki unloading troops into barges. Two torpedoes and two survivors whom guerrillas brought in later to confirm the story. That ship just disappeared.

Operating as we did in the dark and usually out of radio contact we worried more about navigation than action. If we couldn't out gun them we could out run them and no one had any illusions about that plywood. The food was good, quarters were excellent, a shower and a little sleep kept the jangled nerves at bay. We all pitied the infantry.

Sincerely,
J.M. McElfresh

"We'd have followed him into Tokyo Bay," one member of my dad's crew told me. He died in 1991.

EARL MCELFRESH
OLEAN, N.Y.

21st-Century Deception

Near the end of the article on Dennis Wheatley, "Dirty Deeds Done Deceptively" (January/February 2014), there was a comment about his novels being a thing of the past. Out of curiosity I went to Amazon's Kindle and did a search. At least seven of Wheatley's Gregory Sallust novels are available in Kindle e-book format starting with "Contraband," the first of the series.

GEORGE NEACK
BRIGHTON, MICH.

Family History Revealed

My father, Robert Leeson, and his brother, A. Dix Leeson, were featured in your article "Wooden Boats at War" (January/February 2014). Although I tried many times to get my father to talk about battles along the New Guinea shore, he was always reluctant to really get into it with me. The article is most enlightening as to the details of the naval battle at Leyte Gulf.

I attended a recent exhibition on PT boats at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, with Dix Leeson and three of this PT boat buddies. They, of course, reminisced among themselves about all that went on there. Because they were really talking more to each other than to me, they covered events they had witnessed but that I had not heard about. It was a wonderful and sad experience for them, and an education for me, as is your magazine article.

ROBERT LEESON JR.
WAKEFIELD, R.I.

My father captained PT 490. In the photo on pages 36-37, Dad's boat is in the center; he said this was the first time they realized that Japanese planes were flying deliberate kamikaze missions and not just crashing a crippled plane into an enemy vessel.



Excerpts from a letter he wrote in 1962 exactly catch the tenor of all his stories:

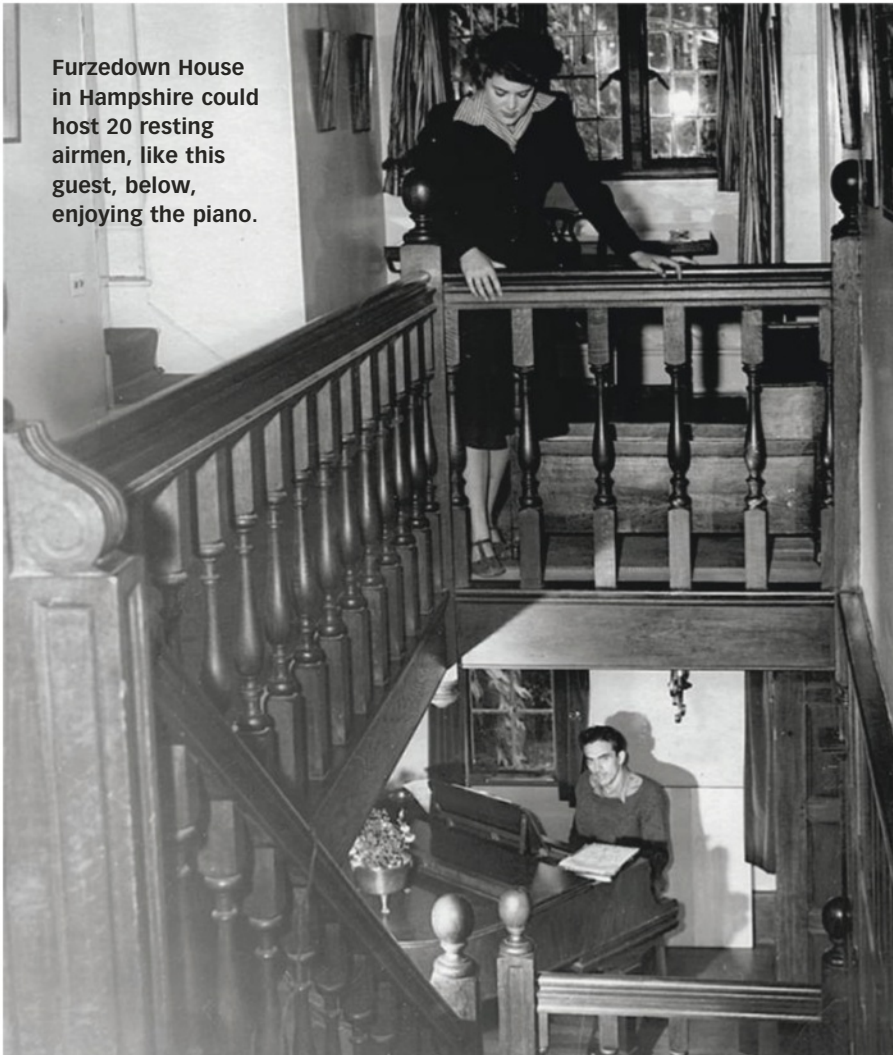
September 25, 1962

Dear Mr. Smith:

Service in Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Morotai, Philippines, etc., was no comic opera, but it was good on the lighter side and there was more lighter side than otherwise. Also included was quite some time in such places as Miami, Newport, Brooklyn, and Panama. Some of those hangovers I remember still. We learned how it felt to want to die. However, the milk punch and pink gin of Kingston was half the cause. I won't even mention Panama.

Mel Haines (PT 492) and myself each received a Silver Star for sinking the destroyer Uzuki. We picked up a Jap snooper plane and every time we would move the least bit fast our wake would just shine in that phosphorus water. Snoopers had a nasty habit of gliding down that wake and dropping bombs, so we were keeping track of him by

Furzedown House in Hampshire could host 20 resting airmen, like this guest, below, enjoying the piano.



Flak House Found

I was interested to read Robert Hecker's piece on the UK flak houses in your January/February issue. As he cannot remember the location of the one that he stayed at, I thought you would be interested to know that it was Furzedown House. A photo of the house (above) is in our book, *'Flak' Houses Then and Now*.

WINSTON RAMSEY

EDITOR IN CHIEF, *AFTER THE BATTLE*
ESSEX, ENGLAND

They Also Served

During the war my dad, Robert Jess Wyatt, was in the U.S. Navy Armed Guard—personnel assigned to cargo ships in detachments of about 20 men to man guns, stand watch, fight, and die. He was first loader

on a stern-mounted 5-inch gun when a round exploded in the breech, killing all but Dad and one other gun crewman. He was in Australia, at Iwo Jima, Tinian, and Peleliu. At Saipan, a sniper firing from the



Members of a North Atlantic Armed Guard gun crew watch for danger.

beach shot him in the leg. Off Okinawa he watched the gunfire with fleet Marines screening transports against kamikazes. Two ships lost, friends lost, both theaters of war—just a guy doing his job. Like the thousands of Armed Guardsmen, he had no fancy battleship, no glorious carrier, no fast destroyer, just a slow ugly old fat merchantman. When my folks visited the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., there was not a plaque or sign mentioning this branch of the U.S. Navy to be seen. Thanks, Armed Guard—unsung heroes still.

GARRETT WYATT

BEND, ORE.

The Not-So-Complex L-5

The January/February Weapons Manual feature attributed a little more complexity and performance to the Stinson L-5 than it actually had. The L-5's engine turned a fixed-pitch (not constant-speed) wood propeller that gave it a cruising speed of about 100 mph; the authoritative Jane's guide cites a top speed of 129 mph. The 163 mph figure cited was probably the "never exceed" or "red line" speed, attainable only in a dive; any faster than that and an airplane might become "self-disassembling."

It is clear from the photo of Lieutenant Davis that the propeller was a typical laminated wood one-piece prop of the day, similar to those used in the smaller Taylorcraft L-2, Aeronca L-3, and Piper L-4 liaison airplanes, and was typical of the time when such airplanes had to be simple, light, and expendable. They were also durable, as the number of each still flying in civilian skies 70 years later can attest.

DAVE SHAW

PENN YAN, N.Y.

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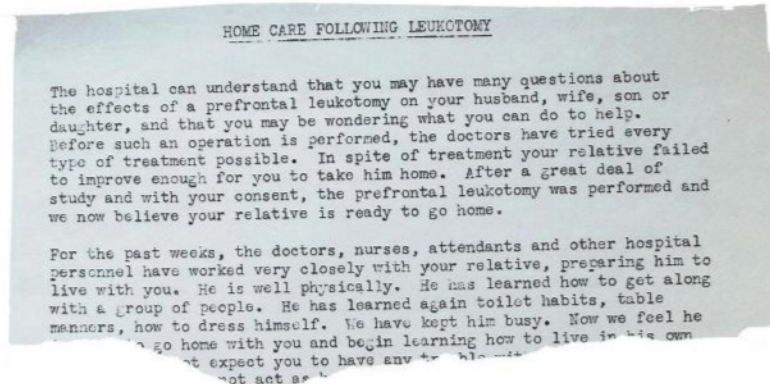
VA Doctors Lobotomized Hundreds of Troubled American Veterans



Veteran Roman Tritz was lobotomized in 1953.

After the war, doctors at overwhelmed veterans hospitals lobotomized about 2,000 emotionally devastated World War II veterans—and probably hundreds more.

Some patients benefited from the procedure, but often lobotomies led to seizures and destroyed men's memories and motor skills. About eight percent of lobotomized veter-



ans died soon after undergoing the operation. The *Wall Street Journal* documented widespread use of lobotomies on veterans in a December article based on old letters and government reports and memoranda.

Congress has ordered the Department of Veterans Affairs to report on care of lobotomized vets. "We need to ensure they benefit from today's state-of-the-art mental health treatments and get the benefits they deserve," said Jeff Miller (R-FL), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

During the war, military hospitals admitted 1.2 million troops for psychiatric and neurological damage, nearly twice the 680,000 hospitalized for battle wounds. Doctors were at a loss to deal with "shell shock" and "battle fatigue," as the profession then labeled such disorders. "We didn't have anything else to do for them," psychiatrist Max Fink, who worked at an army hospital in Kentucky in the 1940s, told the *Journal*. "You couldn't help but have the feeling that the medical community was impotent," Elliot Valenstein, 90, a psy-

DISPATCHES

★ Code breaker Alan Turing got a **posthumous Christmas Eve pardon from Queen Elizabeth II**—more than six decades after his 1952 conviction of "gross indecency" for being homosexual. A brilliant mathematician who helped break Germany's Enigma code and start the computer age,

Reported and written by
Paul Wiseman



Turing in 1951

Turing lost his security clearance and was forced to take estrogen to dull his libido. He killed himself in 1954.

★ Hiroo Onoda, who despite the war's end **hid in the Philippine jungle for 29 years** because he regarded reports of Japan's capitulation to be Allied propaganda, died in January at the age of 91. Declared dead in 1959, the Japanese soldier was found in 1974 by a countryman.



Onoda in Chicago, 1975

chologist who worked for the Veterans Administration in the early 1950s, said. Doctors “were prone to try anything,” he added. Families sometimes demanded the procedure.

In a lobotomy, also called a leukotomy, surgeons drilled two holes in the skull to insert a tool used to cut the prefrontal area behind the forehead away from the rest of the brain. The theory in the procedure’s heyday was that this disconnection limited extreme emotions and compulsive behavior.

But the surgery often left damage. Wisconsin native Roman Tritz, 90, traumatized by serving on bombing runs over Germany, was lobotomized in 1953. The retired machinist lives on Social Security payments and an annuity but isolates himself, believing government agents follow him and that he has magnets in his head.

With the introduction of antipsychotic drugs in the 1950s, lobotomy lost favor. In the 1970s, doctors began to diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder. That condition is treated through psychotherapy and medication.

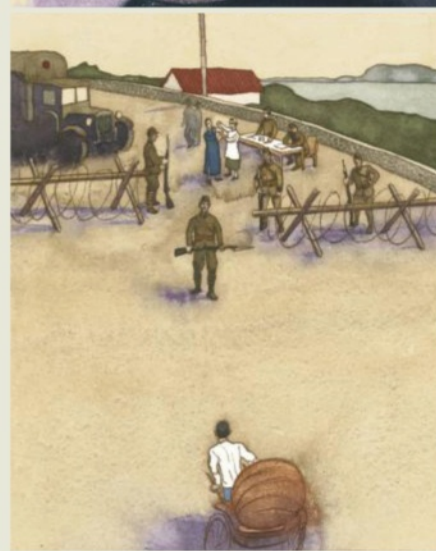
Onoda held out until his former commander came to the Philippines to relieve him.

★ A Rand Corporation study of 20,000 Europeans found that survivors of World War II were likelier than those born later to have diabetes, depression, and possibly heart disease; they were also less likely to seek more education. Female survivors were less apt to marry, men more so.

Artist Reconstructs a Wartime Childhood

James McMullan was just a kid in 1937 when Japanese forces entered Chefoo, the Chinese town where he had spent part of his childhood. He recalls Japanese tanks “rattling along and grinding up the pavement of the main street” that day, and the roadblocks at which imperial troops would demand identification papers, forcibly vaccinating with used needles anyone unable to provide evidence of having gotten cholera shots. And he remembers the day in 1941 when he and his mother left China and their charmed expatriate life in Chefoo (now Yantai) and Tsingtao (Qingdao) to escape the war. His businessman father joined the British Army and wound up with the commandos made famous in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. McMullan grew up to achieve success as an artist—he is best known for a series of theatrical posters for New York’s Lincoln Center Theater—but his boyhood remained “a confused muddle” until he opened a box containing his parents’ wartime letters and began to piece together his family’s story. The result is a candid new memoir, *Leaving China*, published by Algonquin Books.

James McMullan with his parents in Monte Carlo, on a family trip to Europe in late 1936.



Prosecution Sought in Notorious French Massacre

They shot the men and burned the women and children alive in their church. The June 10, 1944, killing of 642 inhabitants of Oradour-sur-Glane was one of the worst Nazi atrocities on French soil, but the officers who ordered and oversaw the slaughter never faced justice. Now authorities in Cologne, Germany, are pursuing charges against one of the enlisted men involved, a former SS member identified under German privacy laws as “Werner C.” The juvenile court in Cologne, where Werner C. now lives, is handling the case because he was 19 at the time of the incident. The war crimes prosecutor reopened the case in 2010 after learning that an SS commander at Oradour had declared: “Today there must be blood.” This suggests that soldiers present must have known a massacre was about to take place. Werner C. and another man are said to have killed 25 men in a barn with a machine gun, said Achim Hengstenberg, a court spokesman in the city. “He is also said to have aided the burning down of the village church.” The suspect doesn’t contest being at Oradour but denies having a hand in the killings, his attorney, Rainer Pohlen, told The Associated Press.

The massacre, four days after the D-Day invasion, was the work of SS veterans of the Eastern Front, where bloody reprisals against civilians were frequent. Possibly in retaliation for Resistance fighters’ kidnapping of a German soldier in an adjacent hamlet that they mistakenly thought was Oradour, troops of the notorious SS *Das Reich* division herded the village’s men into barns and machine-gunned them, then burned the women and children. *Sturmbannführer* Adolf Diekmann, commander of the battalion that did the killing, died in combat three weeks later. Brigadier General Heinz Lammerding, the division’s commander, survived the war and was sentenced to death in absentia, but West Germany refused to extradite him. Lammerding died at home in Bavaria in 1971.



A new war crimes prosecution has revived interest in Oradour-sur-Glane, France (above), the site of a civilian massacre. The town is preserved (below) as a memorial to the dead.



Leaving the charred remnants as a memorial—somber footage of them bookends the 26-episode BBC documentary series *The World At War*—the French government built a new

Oradour-sur-Glane nearby, but the SS action left only six villagers alive. One, Robert Hebras, told France’s BFM TV, “It’s important that we find someone even if it’s 70 years afterwards.”

THE READING LIST

War with the Newts

Karel Čapek (1936)

"This is a brilliant book by the Czech writer who invented the word 'robot.' His story of how giant salamanders take over the world after being exploited by humans is at once a chilling social satire and science fiction. Čapek lampoons contemporaneous politics in all its disturbing forms, from imperialism, to nationalism, to racism, and to fascism, with 'newt expansionists' ultimately demanding more living space. This prescient novel chronicles the run-up to war before it actually happened."

Forgotten Ally

China's World War II, 1937-1945

Rana Mitter (2013)

"Some would argue that World War II in Asia began well before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, with the Sino-Japanese War beginning in 1937. This excellent new book examines the Chinese side of the devastating conflict that preceded the war's Pacific phase. Mitter makes one realize how much China has suffered at the hands of imperialists, invaders, and internal factions—and simply marvel at the nation's resilience."

The Plot Against America

Philip Roth (2004)

"This novel's broad historical hypothesis is that Charles Lindbergh beats FDR

Eri Hotta



in 1940 and makes America increasingly anti-Semitic and closer to Hitler. My book *Japan 1941* is not a counterfactual history, but it was greatly inspired by Roth's novelistic imagination as I asked myself: 'What if Japan did not ally itself

with the fascists in Europe? What if Japan was dealing with a completely different America on the eve of Pearl Harbor?'"

Grave of the Fireflies

Akiyuki Nosaka (1967)

"Better-known through Hayao Miyazaki's animated film, this semi-autobiographical novella by one of postwar Japan's most talented writers imagines a brother and sister orphaned by a June 1945 air raid on Kobe. Akiyuki puts a human face to the consequence of Japanese leaders' decision to go to war in December 1941."

Year Zero

A History of 1945

Ian Buruma (2013)

"This riveting and groundbreaking history considers the world immediately after the war's end. The book's geographical coverage matches its ambitious scope, examining how the world we live in came to be. Buruma doesn't claim to present 'lessons of history.' Rather, he attempts to understand our times and ourselves—which sums up why the war continues to fascinate so many of us."

Eri Hotta, the author of *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy*, has taught at Oxford and at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She lives in New York City.

Warehoused Guillotine Linked to Nazi Beheadings

A guillotine found in storage at a Bavarian museum may have a connection to Nazi-era beheadings. The device, stored out of sight for decades by the Bavarian National Museum, may be the guillotine Nazi executioners used to execute hundreds of dissidents, including the brother and sister who led the nonviolent White Rose group. The guillotine had been thought lost, perhaps thrown into the Danube River.

An 18-month investigation has left

museum officials "pretty certain" they have the guillotine used to behead White Rose organizers Hans and Sophie Scholl, senior curator Sybe Wartena told the German news agency DPA. The device at the museum includes modifications used by Germany's public executioner, Johann Reichhart, who put an estimated 3,000 people to death. Upon assuming power Adolf Hitler ordered 20 such devices built; during his regime's 12-year rule its officials beheaded some

5,000 people, said Museum of Jewish Studies historian Jud Newborn.

Beginning in 1942, White Rose members produced six antiwar leaflets that described the murder of Jews and the German defeat
(continued on page 14)





Hans and Sophie Scholl

(continued from page 13)

at Stalingrad. The Scholls—Sophie was 21, Hans, 24—were arrested in February 1943 for distributing the sixth of their leaflets on campus at the University of Munich. Four days after taking them into custody authorities executed them.

The decision on whether and how to display the killing machine requires “the utmost sensitivity and reverence,” Bavarian National Museum spokeswoman Helga Puhlmann told the *New York Times*. Though the art and culture history museum is one of Germany’s largest, the guillotine most likely will go to a museum that better addresses the Nazi regime’s history, if it is displayed at all. A commission of historians, members of the White Rose Foundation, and moral philosophers will make the final call. “It’s not an item to exhibit disrespectfully,” Bavarian State Minister of Education, Science, and the Arts Ludwig Spaenle told DPA.

ASK WWII



Navy officer Lyndon Johnson with troops in New Guinea

Q. In 1942 President Roosevelt dispatched Representative Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX), then serving in the U.S. Navy, to report on Allied preparedness in the Pacific. General Douglas MacArthur awarded Johnson a medal. Could the award been a bribe? —*Lyndon Collier, Victoria, Australia*

A. “Bribe” is too strong. LBJ received a Silver Star for a June 9, 1942, mission against Lae, in Papua New Guinea, on B-26 *Heckling Hare*, piloted by Lieutenant Walter H. Greer and attacked by Zeros, one of which tail gunner Corporal Harry Baren downed. MacArthur clearly meant to encourage a favorable report. As LBJ biographer Robert Caro notes, “It is indeed somewhat difficult to conclude that the medal was awarded for any considerations other than political. Lieutenant Greer, whose brilliant flying saved the *Heckling Hare*, did not receive a medal, nor did Corporal Baren, who shot down the Zero—no one on the plane received a decoration for the mission over Lae except the observer; in fact, some members of the crew were to fly 25 missions without receiving any medal, much less one as prized as the Silver Star.” —*Jon Guttman*

■ Send queries to: Ask World War II, 19300 Promenade Drive, Leesburg, VA 20176, or worldwar2@weiderhistorygroup.com.

SOUND BITE

“You can tell from [a prisoner’s] eyes if he’s telling the truth when he says, ‘I don’t know. I don’t know.’ The humane torturer would stop at that point.... The cold ones would keep going.”

— Teruichi Ukita, wartime member of the Kempeitai, the Japanese military police, in a January 22, 1997, *New York Times* interview





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 THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM TOURS

Omaha the Hard Way

By Gene Santoro

IT'S AMAZING that Private Hal Baumgarten survived D-Day. The 19-year-old, a member of of Company B, 116th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, was wounded five times. Evacuated on June 7, he had 23 surgeries that inspired him to become a physician; he also was awarded a Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, and the French Legion of Honor. A 1994 visit to the Normandy American Cemetery prompted Dr. Baumgarten, now 89, to speak of the horrors he experienced; Steven Spielberg tapped his memories for *Saving Private Ryan*.

How did your D-Day begin?

At 3:30 a.m., HMS *Javelin* was anchored 11 miles out in the Channel, carrying Companies A, B, C, and D. The winds were 5 mph. The temperature was 50 degrees. It was pitch black. The waves were 10 to 15 feet, so we couldn't go down cargo nets. We climbed over the ship's railing into British LCAs and were lowered to the water by ropes and davits. The low-sided LCAs were thrown around like matchsticks and filled with water fast. Every man was immediately soaked. Most were throwing up. Some were so sick they were lying on the floor. Our feet were frozen. We used our helmets to bail out water and vomit for three hours.

You didn't you wear the special "first wave" jacket. Why?

A buddy warned me it would drown us. It was dark green canvas fastened by two straps that were hard to work, with six big pockets to take the place of army packs. Instead I wore my field jacket. I'd



seen newsreels of the Germans making Jews wear Stars of David, so I took my Eversharp pen and drew a big Star of David on the back and wrote "The Bronx, New York" around it. They would have no difficulty identifying me.

Where did you land?

Dog Green sector, the smallest but most heavily defended part of Omaha Beach. We had to cross four rows of barbed-wired and mined obstacles and face the bluff, where 450 Germans in pillboxes and trenches had MG42 machine guns, a 20mm gun on a swivel, 105mm mortars, and 88mm cannons.

How many GIs landed on Dog Green?

Only two companies—A and B—came in on target. Company A lost three boats to drowning. Company B had four boats

left. Seven boats in all. One Company B boat hit a mine; we were showered with wood, metal, blood, and body parts. The British sailors got frightened—I don't blame them—and dropped the ramps prematurely. The Germans opened up. Both company commanders were killed. All but one of the junior officers and all the sergeants but two were killed. That left 180 men of 720.

What went wrong?

We expected shell-shocked Germans and bomb-made foxholes. That didn't happen. Our offensive support—the USS *Texas*'s shelling, the navy rocket-launching barge, the Eighth Air Force bomb runs—missed the beach. The only weapons left were our amphibious tanks. Fourteen of them drowned, most with the crews. One was destroyed immediately by

an 88. The last remaining tank was firing when I landed.

How did you make it to the beach?

Luck. The man in front of me was killed on the ramp. I dove in behind him and stood neck-deep in bloody water with my rifle over my head. I was five foot ten and 185 pounds. The average GI was five foot seven and 147 pounds. Fellas all around me were being pulled down by those jackets soaked with 100 pounds of weight. Most drowned. Those bouncing up and down trying to get their jackets off were picked off by Germans. We were being wiped out. So we moved in with rifles at port arms, to the right of the tank that was firing. I saw men with their guts hanging out, men carrying flamethrowers whose fuel tanks were hit being cremated. Body parts and the smell of burning flesh were everywhere. Running through the obstacles, we saw mines tossing fellas into the air in pieces. We had 85 percent casualties in the first 15 minutes. Two from my boat team of 30 survived.

You narrowly missed being killed halfway up the beach.

Machine-gun spray came from the trenches; I heard a loud thud on my right side, and my rifle vibrated, like the bat does when you hit a baseball. There was a clean hole in its receiver plate; my seven bullets in the magazine saved my life. There was another thud to my left: that soldier was gone. I hit the sand behind the last row of obstacles. To my right a GI was hit in the chest. To my left, another staggered by with a gaping hole in his forehead and his blond hair streaked with blood. He knelt facing the wall to pray. An MG42 on my right fired over my head and cut him in half.

Then you were wounded.

In my right leg, by a machine gun. I fired up at that machine gun, and it stopped. But that was it for my M1. I was looking to my right when an 88 shell went off a

'We had 85 percent casualties in the first 15 minutes. Two from my boat team of 30 survived.'



few yards in front of me. It ripped off my left cheek to my ear along with the roof of my mouth, blew out my upper left jaw, and left my teeth and gums lying on my tongue. The guy next to me got it full in the face and died. I washed my face out in dirty water, did a dead man's float on the incoming tide, and got to the seawall. A big Georgia boy from Company A pushed me down. "Stay here," he said. "I'm gonna get help." But the machine gun started, so I ran and picked up a rifle—they were a dime a dozen. Wounded guys in the water reached for it as I passed; I pulled up as many as I could. We ran toward our gathering point. A guy in front of me got shot in the head. "Why not me?" I kept thinking. Finally I got to the end of the seawall at the bluff and out of that MG42's range.

Did you get medical help?

About 8 a.m., a medic bandaged me while shells landed around us. He did a great job: the bandage stayed on until I was evacuated. At 10, I looked across the beach: the tide carried in dead men,

blood, body parts, burned-out boats. I saw a wounded buddy, instinctively ran to him, and knelt with my right ear to his mouth. Three pieces of shrapnel hit the left side of my head and the back of my neck. I grabbed his right hand, put it over my shoulder, and dragged him to the wall. The 104th Medical arrived and started giving IVs; a sergeant told me where to go to get evacuated.

Why didn't you go?

I figured I was a dead duck. How were they gonna put me back together, with my teeth on my tongue? I didn't know about plastic surgery. So I was determined to keep fighting. About 1 p.m., I left the beach with 11 other wounded guys. We had a firefight outside Vierville; the Ranger with us emptied his gun into three surrendering Germans. We got to the beach road and crossed into bocage. Shells started falling; I started crawling. Something hit my left foot. I had tripped a castrator mine: the bullet went between my toes instead of my legs. I took the shoe off, dumped out the blood, and put a beautiful bandage on. Later my second toe had to be amputated.

You hid in the bocage with six other GIs until midnight.

When they decided to move, I didn't know if I could walk. We were crossing the road when an MG42 ambushed us. I was crouched, cradling that left foot, so I got a bullet through my left upper lip; it took out the lip and my upper right jaw. So I have no jaw; without a plate in my mouth, I can reach up with my tongue and touch my nose. They were all mortally wounded, moaning and dying. I was alone, lying on top of the Ranger. I was sure we'd lost the war. I gave myself a morphine shot and slept till 3 a.m. When I woke, a bright, tremendous moon lit an ambulance that was coming down the road. I had the Ranger's submachine gun, and pulled the bolt back. It was an American ambulance. ★

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Curators at **The National World War II Museum** solve readers' artifact mysteries

1 My father, Captain William Palitz, was an intelligence officer with an air transport command (the Ninth Air Force's 45th Troop Carrier Squadron, 316th Troop Carrier Group, 52nd Troop Carrier Wing), assigned to C-47s carrying primarily troops of the 82nd Airborne. He served in Tunisia, Sicily, and Italy, trained in England for the D-Day invasion, and went on to Normandy and Market Garden. He died in 1976. I found this pin on one of his uniform shirts. It looks well worn; I was told it may not be military. Can you tell me what it is? —Wendy Palitz, Leesburg, Va.

This is not a military insignia, but a Hi-Y club pin. "Hi-Y" stands for High School YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), and was open to boys. Organizations for girls and younger children were established later. Your father probably received his pin in high school; the "K" drop charm likely represents his particular chapter. Popular in the early 20th century, Hi-Y clubs were social organizations built around providing service to community and developing leadership skills. Soldiers

were not authorized to wear non-military insignia on military uniforms, but your father may have placed it there later for safekeeping, or because it was important to him.
—Toni Kiser, Assistant Director of Collections & Exhibits

2 My father is a garbageman who often comes upon the discarded belongings of deceased veterans. It is sad to see medals and ribbons in the trash, and he does his best to rescue them and pass them to me. This piece from my collection of military memorabilia has always baffled me. It appears to be a Hitler Youth ring, but it's so small I can't get it even halfway down my pinky finger. The material is neither spectacular nor flimsy; I would guess it's steel. Any help on knowing what it is would be much appreciated. —Chad Gish, South Bend, Ind.

This is not an official item of the Nazi state, making it difficult to authenticate. The only official Nazi rings I know of are SS honor rings, which look nothing like yours. Long before the Nazi Party made the swastika its insignia, that symbol stood for luck and prosperity in many cultures. Many non-Nazi items from the 1920s and 1930s bore the swastika—playing cards and poker chips, to name a few. In fact, before December 1941 the U.S. 45th Infantry Division, originally a National Guard outfit heavy with soldiers from the American Southwest, adopted the swastika—a symbol sacred among Native Americans—as its insignia (far left); once we were at war with Germany,



Bill Palitz (left), as a lieutenant in 1943; the group that issued the pin, the YMCA, helped found the USO during the war.

2 Swastika-marked items don't always hail from Nazi Germany.

3



the 45th patch became a Thunderbird. I don't see any details that can conclusively identify this ring's origin.
—Larry Decuers, Curator

3 We found this 1.5-by-7.5-inch metal plate in my father-in-law's belongings. He fought in the Pacific Theater, as a mechanic first class, in the U.S. Navy. Could you help us identify this, and its message? —Jim and Bev Mackenthun, Glencoe, Minn.

This is an identification plate of a type common on Japanese machinery, aircraft, and other equipment. As on American equipment, these plates would help identify the item, its maker, serial number, and so on. To translate the plate we turned to Hidehiko Miura, a lieutenant colonel in the Japanese army: the characters on the plate are equivalent to "replacement engine housing." Without more to go on it would be very difficult to pinpoint the plate's origin—

but it's fitting that a mechanic found it.
—Toni Kiser

Have a **World War II** artifact you can't identify? Write to Footlocker@weiderhistorygroup.com with the following:

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Rich Man's War?

By Robert M. Citino

IT'S GOOD TO BE WEALTHY, and World War II saw the richer side win. The Grand Alliance was a behemoth, consisting of the world's largest land mass (the Soviet Union), the biggest overseas empire (Great Britain), and the financial and industrial giant (the United States). Germany and Japan were strong states, certainly, but they could hardly compete in terms of production, manpower, or power projection. In retrospect, it is easy to oversimplify the Allied victory as an inevitable triumph of superior resources.

It is intuitive to believe that bigger, better armed forces automatically confer an advantage, and like all intuitive ideas, this one does have much to recommend it. After all, no less an authority than Napoleon once famously declared that God was on the side of the "big battalions." It is always risky to argue with Napoleon, but though his axiom is true to a degree, it is also incomplete. While superior numbers and wealth are obviously important, modern war requires more than numbers.

The real test of the "inevitability" thesis took place on the battlefield. It would be interesting to ask an Allied soldier or sailor, airman or Marine, "How did those superior resources work out for you?" You'd no doubt get back a contemptuous snort, seasoned with the off-color language that made this country great. If the Allies really were fighting a rich man's war, then why so often did their men have to do so outnumbered and at a disadvantage?

A few specific examples: Try telling a Soviet grunt at Stalingrad that he was fighting a war with "superior resources." He'd be stupefied. The Germans at Stalingrad had better tanks, better weapons, and even an advantage in numbers through much of the battle. That city fight—forcing the Germans into a murderous block-by-block slog—was the great equalizer. Every Ivan knew that, and so did General Vasily Chuikov of the 62nd Army holding the city. His troops fought a poor man's fight, moving



Triumph wasn't inevitable for this Marine at Eniwetok Atoll in February 1944.

by night to nullify gains the Germans made the preceding day and deploying as closely as possible to their adversary to limit enemy air and artillery strikes. In the process, tens of thousands of the Soviets were killed. A lot of factors won Stalingrad, but superior resources were not high on the list.

Rich man's war? Tell it to the Marines on Guadalcanal. The initial landings on August 7, 1942, met only minor opposition, but bad things started happening almost immediately. The naval commander for the operation, Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, had such jitters about stationing his aircraft carriers in the narrow waters that he actually withdrew them on day two. That night (August 8-9), Japanese cruisers inflicted a crushing defeat on U.S. naval forces off Savo Island. With the carriers gone and the Japanese dominating the waters, the U.S. Navy had to suspend transports to the island, leaving the Marines isolated. Fighting for the richest nation on earth, they survived on abandoned stores of Japanese rice and dried fish. Subsequent battles were as hard-fought and

as close as they come. The Marines hung on, but only by the skin of their teeth. Admiral Ernest J. King had famously declared that the Marines would land on Guadalcanal "even on a shoestring," and the men wound up doing just that.

And so it went. American soldiers facing down the panzers on Salerno. Soviet T-34 crews desperately trying to close the range against superior enemy tanks at Kursk. Canadian soldiers landing at Dieppe in the morning and being frog-marched off the beach as POWs less than 10 hours later. British infantry gamely holding the perimeter at Dunkirk, buying time for the rest of the army to evacuate the continent.

And in these moments lies the real problem with seeing World War II as a contest of national wealth. Sure, the Allies had key strategic advantages. At the end of the day, however, winning the war required a lot of men willing to risk their lives, ordinary guys who looked around and realized it was their time to die. It is a disservice to them to think that any of it was inevitable. ★

Battlewagon Becalmed

By Rob Morris

The USS *North Carolina*'s stern battery looms over the ship, which in 1961 became a floating museum berthed at Wilmington, North Carolina.



A FLUKE OF TIMING brought us onto the battleship on December 7. The weekend my wife and I chose to beat the Christmas crunch included the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, from which the USS *North Carolina* would someday wage war.

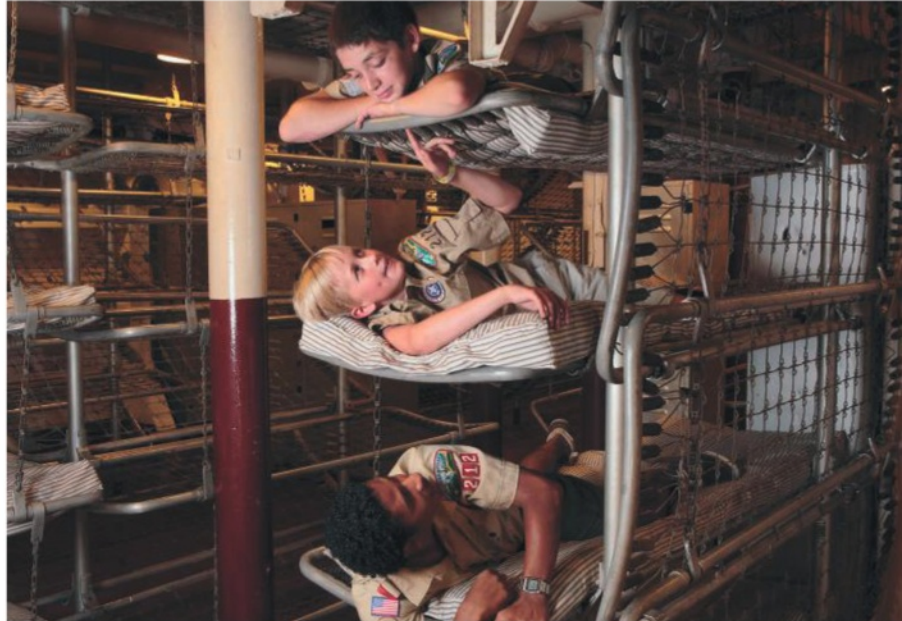
We had noticed the enormous ship from afar while traveling its namesake state's coast. Moored across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington's waterfront, the *North Carolina* is hard to miss, painted as it is in "measure 32," a color scheme intended to confuse submarine crews. Here, the geometric pattern makes the 728-foot battlewagon pop out from the marsh where it is docked, serene but still formidable, bristling with more than

100 guns. The *North Carolina* hosts about 200,000 paying visitors a year and battles a less obvious, more persistent enemy: the elements. Corrosion at the waterline is evidence of a hull badly needing repair.

Our tour took us around and inside the *North Carolina* to see how the ship worked and how the more than 2,000 crewmen lived and fought, from sleeping and sanitary arrangements to loading the 16-inch guns and tracking enemy aircraft while the vessel escorted carriers in the Pacific. Most of this was new to me. During the war my father skippered a PT boat in the Pacific, but he was not much for war stories. Once, with my young son and father-in-law, a retired navy pilot, I visited another vintage battleship, but we

only made a circuit topside. As a reporter I spent a day aboard an aircraft carrier, a trip that showed me how far removed my life was from what men did in a war at sea. For the un- or semi-initiated, a day on the *North Carolina* is a tangible and compelling history lesson.

That Saturday morning we caught up with Frank Glossl who, like other volunteers portraying crewmen, wore a seaman's uniform. Glossl chairs the nonprofit Friends of the Battleship *North Carolina*, but also assumes the role of a radarman first class. Visitors can wander the ship unescorted, but we were fortunate to have Glossl as our guide to tell the story of this 35,000-ton war machine, a remarkable creation even by today's



Clockwise from top left: Volunteer John Whitley, dressed as a seaman, explains the engine room's intricacies; scouts from Wilmington Troop 212 study the meaning of "close quarters"; that "measure 32" paint job stands out along the Cape Fear River; an engine telegraph on the bridge once transmitted commands to the engine room; crewmen fire the 16-inch forward main guns during an August 1941 shakedown.



sophisticated technical standards.

A tight stairway took us down to the first of the lower decks, the crew's quarters. Chairs and tables in mess areas emphasize utility, not comfort, and the galleys have industrial-grade appliances. In a bunk area, narrow mattresses racked four and five high illustrate what "close quarters" actually means. Rudimentary

toilets and showers—a wartime sailor had 150 seconds maximum to scrub—offer neither elbowroom nor privacy.

This floating fortress had a laundry, a tailor and shoe shop, barbershop, post office, general store, and fully equipped dentist's office and sickbay, including operating room and medical laboratory. With a machine shop, printing press, and

darkroom—not to mention a soda fountain and ice cream parlor—the *North Carolina* was truly self-contained.

A bomb or shell could penetrate the top deck, designed to explode ordnance before it reached the armor protecting the engines, magazines, fire-control computers, and communications gear. Besides factoids like those and the ship's overall



enormity, what is striking about the *North Carolina* is the heavy look and feel of its machinery, from the bulky analog computer that controlled the main guns to the elevators and conveyors that hauled shells as heavy as 2,700 pounds to turrets to be propelled as far as 23 miles by six 90-pound bags of gunpowder.

Commissioned in 1941 as America's first new dreadnought since the 1920s, the *North Carolina* acquired the nickname "Showboat," steaming in and out of New York Harbor to undergo sea trials. On July 11, 1942, seven months after the Japanese attacked Hawaii, the battleship arrived at Pearl Harbor. The crowds of well-wishers lining the shore puzzled the crew. "The bands were playing, the people were cheering, the fire boats were going off," Glossl said. "As they came around the point, it hit them. Salvage operations were under way." Pearl Harbor was a battered junkyard. At that moment, the *North Carolina* constituted America's heavy fleet in the Pacific, and the new fast battleship was a sign of hope.

Near the end of our tour with Glossl we climbed to the bridge. During heavy fighting, the captain and his personnel there could take refuge in a conning tower with 16-inch armor. In the combat information center, on the right day, you might see volunteers reenacting how crewmen tracked aircraft and ships.

The narrow passageways and watertight hatches inspire an intricate dance: duck head, raise knee, step over ledge, straighten—but not too enthusiastically. Some areas were open for browsing;

others were behind Plexiglas. On my own, I made my way below to an engine room, where chemical engineer John Whitley was in character as a water tender first class. Four propellers, each with its own power plant, could push the ship to 28 knots, or 32 mph. Whitley recruited visitors to demonstrate by voice and gesture and signal how orders traveled from the bridge to the battlegun's bowels, where crewmen dialed in the vessel's speed.

Throughout the ship, placards explain life aboard, often using vintage photos accompanied by accounts from the men of the *North Carolina*. Boatswain's Mate First Class William Taylor described the scene on August 24, 1942, when, on a crew of a five-inch gun, he fought in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, the ship's first action: "A powder can was placed in the tray, then a shell and then rammed. The gun would fire and the hot case would be ejected and (sent out into) the scuttle.... The powder came up through the deck with a primer protector on it. The powder man pulled the protector off, then loaded. This time he didn't remove the protector and when rammed, the breech didn't close. My job was to open the hatch, remove the powder can and get rid of it. My hot-case man had a tough job when the cases didn't go out. They would bounce and he would have to catch it and throw it out. Usually the first or second case would catch him under the nose and he would be a bloody mess." That day *North Carolina* gunners shot down seven planes and helped down seven others.

Having participated in every major Pacific campaign and earning 15 battle stars—in the process surviving a torpedo strike and losing only 10 men—the *North Carolina* was decommissioned in 1947. Placed on inactive reserve, the old warrior was scrapyard-bound when state residents raised money to adopt it as a memorial to the more than 10,000 North Carolinians who died in the war.

Now a National Historic Landmark, the *North Carolina* was transferred by the U.S. Navy to the state in 1961. The Friends underwrites upkeep and improvements with campaigns, like one under way now that will fund educational programs and extensive repairs to the hull.

One option for that work was to tow the ship to Norfolk, which would have required dismantling part of the superstructure so the vessel would fit under the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Instead, the extensive dry-dock activities will take place on-site, inside a cofferdam—more economical and practicable. Still, it would have been something to see that grand old battleship making its way up the Atlantic coast, even under tow. ★

WHEN YOU GO

The USS *North Carolina* is berthed at Wilmington, North Carolina, about 130 miles south of Raleigh, North Carolina, and about 70 miles north Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The battleship and its adjoining complex, which includes a gift shop, visitor center, and park, is open year-round for individual and group tours and can be rented for private events such as weddings. For details on tours, schedule, and admission, visit battleshipnc.com. Delta and US Airways serve Wilmington International Airport.

WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

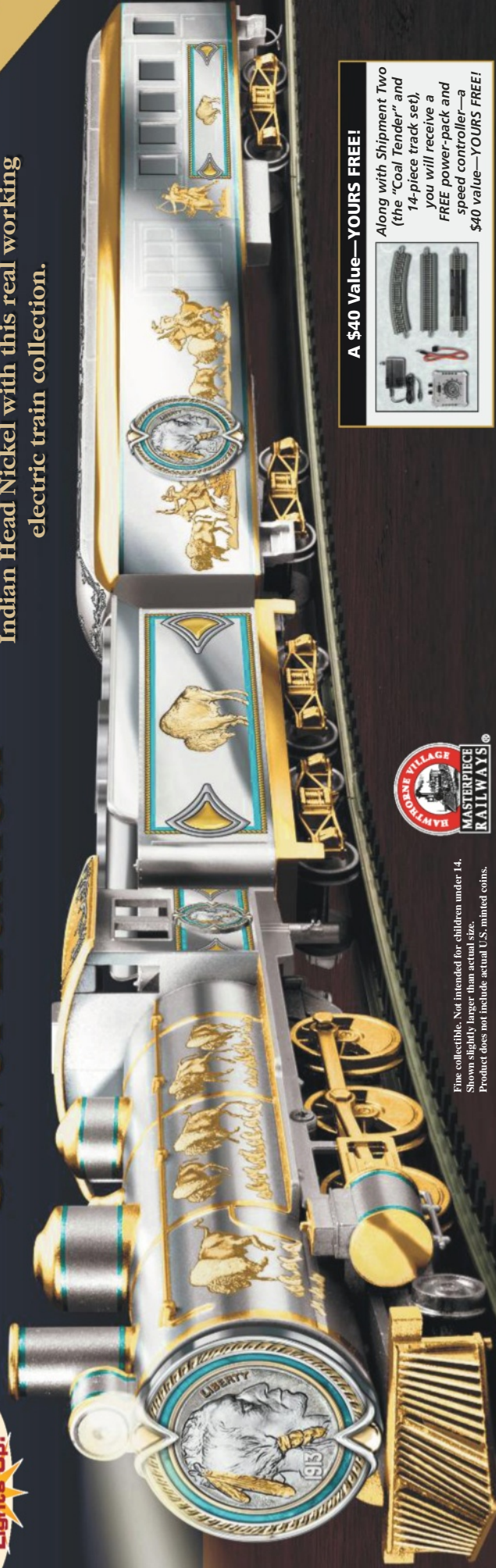
Downtown Wilmington is rich with lodging, whether hotel or bed and breakfast, restaurants, and nightspots. The Hilton Wilmington Riverside offers a commanding view of the river in the center of downtown. On the south shore, Leland offers shopping, major chain hotels and restaurants, often familiar franchises. The coastal region's resort areas stretch all the way to Myrtle Beach, a pleasant day trip from the dreadnought.

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D-DAY 70

A Knife in the Vitals

by John C. McManus

A green lieutenant and a battle-hardened sergeant led the first Americans to fight their way off bloody Omaha Beach





The 32 men in the first boat section of E Company, 16th Infantry Regiment, landed late, in chin-high water, at 6:45 a.m.—15 minutes after H-Hour, June 6, 1944. Their job, like that of the company's other five boat sections, was to assault the Easy Red sector of Omaha Beach, rapidly advance inland, and destroy any German resistance they encountered.

Somewhere up the slope in the murky dawn lurked a heavily fortified and armed strongpoint called *Widerstandsnest* (WN) 62—one of 15 along Omaha Beach. The German soldiers there had shelter from naval fire and a sweeping view of the eastern side of Easy Red. Their weapons covered a wide valley, or

draw, that offered an invader a natural exit off the beach. The Americans dubbed it the E-3 draw.

To outflank WN 62, E Company was to land a few hundred yards west of the strongpoint, where enemy fire was likely to be light. But strong tides, confusion, and, most likely, coxswain errors, landed five E Company boat sections in the shadow of the E-3 draw, right in front of WN 62's guns.

Only the first boat section, led by Lieutenant John Spalding, landed where it should have, mainly through sheer fortune. When they got ashore, those 32 men, unaware of their comrades' fate, constituted the entire western flank of the 1st Infantry Division. That tiny force became the first American unit to make it off the beach, and would go on to inflict irreparable damage on German defenders. But the cost was high, and in some instances did not come due until years later. ➤

Viewed from a Higgins boat, men of the 16th Regimental Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, wade toward the Easy Red sector of Omaha Beach, about an hour after the first landings.



Section leader Lieutenant John Spalding (second from right, with his brothers) came ashore during the first wave.



"There wasn't a braver man that walked the ground," a fellow E Company sergeant said of Phil Streczyk (above).

LIEUTENANT JOHN SPALDING, 29, WAS A NEW platoon leader from Owensboro, Kentucky. Wiry and thin, with a thick mane of black hair and a boyish face, Spalding worked as a sportswriter for the *Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer* (he wrote a popular column, "Sports Sparks") and part-time in a local department store's men's clothing and furnishings section before he enlisted in 1941. Spalding served a couple years in the ranks, then earned a commission through Officer

Candidate School. He had a wife and young son back home, but the marriage was troubled by his absence.

Spalding's second in command was Technical Sergeant Philip Streczyk, 25, who had been with the unit since North Africa. A native of East Brunswick, New Jersey, Streczyk was a classic child of the Depression. One of 10 children in a Polish-American family—he spoke Polish fluently—he had quit school after eighth grade to help support his family, working as a truck driver until he was drafted at 21. With a sweep of light brown hair atop a high forehead and a prominent chin, Streczyk was average in size and build but had an outsized reputation for common sense and bravery in combat. "He was fearless," Private Stanley Dzierga remembered. "I never saw a man like that in my life. He wasn't that big of a guy. He just... did everything and it just seems he was immune to the fire."

With Spalding in the lead, the men left their Higgins boat and hopped into the surf roughly 200 yards from the rocky Easy Red shore. As Streczyk recalled, "the fire against the section was small in volume and erratic." The men spread apart into a V formation about 50 yards across and began wading toward the beach, dodging mine-laden obstacles and the desultory machine-gun fire.

As was common that day, especially at low tide, the water's depth varied step to step. Soon the men were in over their heads, struggling to stay afloat. "There was a strong undercurrent carrying us to the left," Spalding recalled. He inflated his life belt, and lost his M1 carbine. "I swallowed so much salt water trying to get ashore. I came so near drowning I shudder to think about it."

Private Fred Reese had stuffed a large roll of toilet paper into his helmet. As waves sloshed over and around him, the roll unraveled. Gobs of tissue draped his glasses and face until he could hardly see, but he kept going. Spalding called out to his overloaded men, ordering them to get rid of any equipment that was too heavy to carry. "We lost our mortar, most of the mortar ammunition, one of our two bazookas, and much of the bazooka ammunition," he said.

All 32 men made it to the beach, many of them shocked and exhausted by the ordeal. Several had lost their personal weapons. "I was considerably shaken up," Spalding wrote later in a letter to his mother. "Completely soaked, my equipment, heavy when dry, seemed to weigh a ton when I came out of the water."

As the men caught their breath, they noticed that the beach looked absolutely pristine. Obstacles—concrete pyramids called tetrahedra, log barricades—many tipped with Teller mines—and steel girder antitank arrays the Americans called "hedgehogs"—were still in place. Barbed wire covered the embankment at the end of the beach and the brambled incline of gullies, marshes, and swales that led inland. Clearly, the pre-invasion bombardment had accomplished nothing. Back in England, while briefing his unit in the marshaling area,

With Spalding in the lead, the men left their Higgins boat and hopped into the surf. **Soon the men were in over their heads**, struggling to stay afloat.

rookie officer Spalding had told his men the navy and air force would pummel the enemy so badly that all they would have to do was form a line and walk inland. “How little we knew,” he remarked later. “How great our faith!”

Machine-gun and rifle fire began hitting from somewhere on the right. Staff Sergeant Curt Colwell used a Bangalore torpedo to blow a hole through a snarl of barbed wire, and the men filtered through the gap and began to cross the rocky beach toward an embankment. There, clumps of brush gave way to a shaggy little ravine that led steadily upward to a prominent ridge parallel to the beach. Spalding did not have to give orders; the men had trained for just this situation and instinctively kept moving. “They were too waterlogged to run,” Spalding remembered, “but they went as fast as they could.”

The enemy fire worsened, wounding several soldiers. A private named William Roper caught a round in the foot, sat down, and rolled over. He attempted to give himself first aid but could not reach the laces of his leggings. Spalding paused, undid Roper’s laces, took off his brogan-style combat boot, and moved on, leaving the wounded man for the section medic.

The lieutenant heard mines exploding on the beach and mortar rounds bursting nearby. All around, men kept pressing inland. It occurred to Spalding that he ought to report his situation to Captain Ed Wozenski, E Company’s commander, who had been set to come ashore with one of the other boat sections. Spalding had no way of knowing that Wozenski was pinned down on the other side of the E-3 draw with the other five boat sections, absorbing the worst of WN 62’s wrath. (For more on WN 62, see “Things Were About to Get Ugly” in *World War II’s 70th anniversary D-Day special, D-Day: This Great and Noble Undertaking*, available in April.)

Spalding squatted, grabbed his SCR-

536 walkie-talkie radio, and extended the antenna. “Copper One to Copper Six,” he said. For a few seconds, he listened for a reply from Wozenski. Nothing. “Copper One to Copper Six. This is One. Come in Copper Six.” Still nothing. Spalding glanced down. The mouthpiece of the radio had been shot away.

Within minutes, the unit—now consisting of about 27 unscathed soldiers; accounts vary—had made it off the beach and reached the partial cover of demolished stone buildings the Americans came to call the “Roman ruins.” The ground



A 16th Infantry Regiment boat section scrambles into a Higgins boat during a May 1944 exercise. Each man had a precise spot to stand and specific job aboard the landing craft.



Toting heavy machine gun equipment, a 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment unit moves along a cliffside at the convergence of Omaha's Fox Red and Fox Green beaches. The loose, rocky footing near shore, called shingle, was typical of the region.

around the ruins was mainly thick scrub, muddy marshland, and the foot of the ravine. A German machine-gun crew, firing from the ridge, locked in on them and began pouring accurate fire into their midst. Rifle fire also spattered around them. One sergeant, a Philadelphian named Louis Ramundo, decided to try to find the rest of E Company. He got up to run, but was hit and killed, probably by a rifleman.

The Americans returned fire as best they could, while Spalding and Sergeant Streczyk considered what to do next. They had no idea what had become of the rest of their company, little information about German defenses in the area, and almost no heavy weapons. They figured the marshy ground ahead was mined. But they had to keep moving inland and destroy German positions. Their only advantage was the cover of the ravine, and the fact that they had blundered into a spot out of reach of the enemy strongpoints.

Spalding and Streczyk decided to recon the ground ahead. The experienced Streczyk was the sort to do a job himself. He took Private First Class Richard Gallagher and began to survey the marsh. Sure enough, he spotted several mines, so the pair changed direction and set off through the thick brush. After

several minutes, Gallagher returned and urged everyone to follow him up a defilade in the ravine.

"I called my men forward," Spalding recalled, "and we cautiously moved along the defilade, keeping our eyes open for the little box mines the Germans had planted throughout the area. We made it through without mishap. The Lord was with us on that one." In fact there were mines; Spalding's group missed them by luck or—more likely—because Streczyk had sniffed a way around them.

The Americans ascended the ravine. The machine guns continued to fire intermittently, but less accurately because the ravine's many dips and swales offered the Americans cover. Recalling mockups and reconnaissance photographs they had studied, the men realized the gunfire had to be coming from a trench near an unfinished German strongpoint, WN 64, guarding the west edge of Easy Red. As the Americans continued upward, an enemy gunner again opened fire. Private First Class Raymond Curley got hit, as did Sergeant Joseph Slaydon. Sergeant Hubert Blades fired a bazooka at the gun but missed and, in return, took a bullet through his left arm just above the wrist.

Blades seemed unfazed. A veteran of three invasions, he was sure his wound would earn him a ticket off the front line. He rushed to Spalding and showed him the wound. “Gee, Lieutenant, ain’t it a beauty?” Blades said. Spalding noticed envious looks on other men’s faces.

AS STAFF SERGEANT GRANT PHELPS SPRAYED THE bluff with fire from a Browning Automatic Rifle, Spalding and several others rushed the enemy nest and overran the lone gunner. Terrified, the man shot his hands into the air, pleading “*Kamerad!*”—German for comrade. “We could have easily killed him,” Spalding recalled, “but since we needed prisoners for interrogation I ordered the men not to shoot him.”

The prisoner said he was a Pole—probably from the 716th Infantry Division, into which the manpower-impooverished Germans had pressed many Eastern Europeans into duty. In Polish, Streczyk interrogated the hapless man, who told the sergeant there were 16 soldiers behind him who were supposed to defend the strongpoint’s flank. They were out of sight somewhere in the trenches. He claimed that unit had voted that morning not to fight, but were forced by their German NCOs to stay put and resist.

Streczyk was not in a forgiving mood. He smacked the Pole in the head. “So why are you shooting at us now?” he asked. The prisoner cowered. Spalding was equally dubious; the man said he hadn’t fired on any Americans, but “I had seen him hit three.”

At that moment, up in the trenches but unbeknownst to Streczyk and the others, a sergeant, Clarence Colson, and other first boat section men had overrun at least one of the enemy positions. That opened up a key route of advance—for the section, and for the 16th Infantry Regiment as a whole.

After the fight at the machine-gun position, Spalding’s group at last made contact with other GIs from their regiment. Captain Joe Dawson and his G Company had

landed about 20 minutes after Spalding and followed much the same path off the beach and inland—where Dawson had personally destroyed a machine-gun nest. His company had suffered 63 casualties on the beach, primarily from mortar and machine-gun fire, but the unit was more or less intact and in good condition to fight. Dawson and Spalding briefly discussed the possible whereabouts of the remainder of E Company—Dawson didn’t know either—and decided to proceed in different directions.

Dawson and his men would go straight over the destroyed machine-gun nest on the bluff and head for Colleville-sur-Mer, the nearest town. Spalding would bear west toward



Those who made it through D-Day without a scratch came to think of that as something of a miracle. **'No man had a right to come out alive,'** Spalding said.

WN 64 and another beach exit—the E-1 draw—clear the trenches there, and destroy any fortifications. Both men knew that the penetrations they had made were tenuous and vulnerable to counterattack—especially if, as they figured, most American invaders were still pinned down on the beaches. Even so, their small teams were a threat to the Germans. An American on a beach was a target; an American roaming inland was a hunter. So, like knives probing in the Germans' vitals, the two groups resumed their advance.

FOR MUCH OF THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON,

Sergeant Streczyk and Private First Class Gallagher led the way for the first boat section. Somewhere along the way, Lieutenant Spalding picked up a discarded German Mauser rifle to replace his lost M1 carbine, and soon after traded in the Mauser on another found carbine. Behind them the unit spread over nearly 500 yards, which made it hard to coordinate their movements. They swept through a network of well-camouflaged trenches protecting the eastern approaches to WN 64. Streczyk spotted a machine-gun team. He shot the gunner. The two other enemy soldiers surrendered. The Americans tried to interrogate them, but they would not talk. "We continued to the west with them in tow," Spalding said.

Several hundred yards inland, they warily crossed an orchard and several hedgerows. They navigated two minefields. Sergeant Fred Bisco, a combat veteran and former soccer player from New Jersey, warned everyone to avoid dead grass, which usually meant the presence of mines. Sticking to a well-worn trail, the men kept going until they saw at a distance the trenches, machine-gun pits, and concrete bunkers of WN 64.

They began taking inaccurate small-arms fire, so Spalding and Streczyk organized the men into a defensive semi-circle, while Sergeant Kenneth Peterson fired a bazooka into a construction shack. Nothing happened. Spalding and Streczyk scouted ahead. "We found an underground dugout and an 81mm mortar emplacement, a position for an antitank gun, and construction for a pillbox," Spalding said. The unoccupied mortar position was equipped with vivid range cards—visual aids intended to guide gunners' fire—accurately showing what seemed to be every inch of Omaha Beach. Streczyk fired a few shots into the dugout, then yelled in Polish and German for the occupants to come out. This roused seven enemy soldiers, three of them wounded. Streczyk recalled: "Germans inside the work were caught flat-footed."

As the Americans took control of their latest prisoners, small-arms fire began raining from the right. This launched a running firefight with well-armed enemy soldiers occupy-

ing communication trenches leading over the bluff and down to the beach. The two sides hurled grenades back and forth. One German soldier was able to throw three grenades at the Americans before they overran him and forced him to surrender. "We should have shot him but we didn't," Spalding wrote to his mother a few weeks later. "He was a young Nazi, the type which is crazy about Hitler."

Spalding himself came close to being a casualty. He had never checked the safety lever on his salvaged carbine. During the firefight in the communication trenches, he encountered an armed German and tried to open fire. But the safety was on and the carbine would not shoot. He reached for the safety catch, hit the clip release instead, and the clip hit the ground. Fortunately for Spalding, Sergeant Peterson had the German covered and he surrendered.

Elsewhere, Private Vinny DiGaetano, a flamethrower man, approached a dugout. As Streczyk covered him, he unleashed a stream of fire. Enemy soldiers "were hiding in the back or something," DiGaetano said. "If you get them, they know about it. In thirty seconds, or a minute, the tank was empty." Several smoldering Germans emerged and surrendered. Streczyk clapped DiGaetano on the back. "Good going, Dig!" he exclaimed.

By early afternoon, the Americans had captured WN 64's only antitank gun, along with mortar emplacements, several concrete dugouts, and a half-built casemate that would have housed the antitank gun. None of Spalding's men had been wounded. They had killed two or three Germans and taken at least 17 prisoners. Spalding's stalwarts had neutralized a substantial portion of the German defenses at Omaha Beach and significantly diminished the amount of fire directed at Easy Red. Without their efforts, the Omaha landings would have been even more costly.

THE SPALDING-STRECZYK SECTION FOUGHT AMID

the hedgerows around Colleville-sur-Mer for the rest of the afternoon and early evening before finally linking up outside Colleville with the remnants of E Company. Around that time, the first boat section lost another man: Late in the day during a close-quarters firefight among hedgerows, machine-gun fire struck Fred Bisco. "He had half his face blown away," Private First Class Walter Bieder remembered sadly. Of the 32 men who stepped ashore that morning, eight had been wounded and two were dead.

Those who made it through D-Day without a scratch came to think of that as something of a miracle. "No man had a right to come out alive," Spalding said. In July, seven of the

section's men, Spalding and Streczyk included, received the Distinguished Service Cross for their actions that day.

BUT ALTHOUGH SOME MEN HAD ESCAPED WITH their lives, their intense experiences marked them all—none more so than the two leaders.

John Spalding spent three more months in combat, was wounded in Germany on September 27 during the battle for Aachen, and spent about two months recuperating in a hospital before returning to the front lines. In February 1945, during the 1st Infantry Division's push to cross the Roer River, he was medically evacuated with combat fatigue. The war had wrecked Spalding's confidence. He was irritable, nervous, and depressed. He hated guns and feared being around them. He had terrible nightmares and feelings of guilt over the death and wounding of his men. He felt he had let them down. "I didn't have any unusual experiences," he told a reporter at home in 1945 just before his discharge. "I didn't do a thing. My men did it all. Don't give me the credit."

Back in Owensboro, Spalding returned to selling men's clothing. But he and his wife divorced. He remarried quickly, in October 1946, and seemed to flourish, fathering three more children, winning election to two terms in the Kentucky legis-

lature, and advancing to manager of men's clothing and furnishings at the department store.

But trouble lurked. On the evening of November 6, 1959, Spalding's wife shot him with a brand-new .22 caliber rifle. The bullet entered his left side below his ribs, tearing his aorta, and he bled to death on the bedroom floor of their modest one-story home. Spalding, a hero of history's greatest invasion, was dead at age 44.

Like Spalding, Phil Streczyk paid a heavy price for his valor on D-Day. Company commander Ed Wozenski, who also survived that bloody day, wrote of the courageous New Jersey native, "If [he] did not earn a Congressional Medal of Honor, no one did." By November 1944, when Streczyk was fighting in the Hürtgen Forest, he had logged 440 days of frontline combat. After suffering multiple wounds and dodging numerous near misses throughout the war, he was permanently evacuated with combat fatigue.

After his discharge Streczyk became a builder in Florida. He married and became father to four. But he could not leave the war behind. His physical wounds deeply pained him; his emotional wounds might have been worse. At night traumatic battle dreams tormented him. In 1957, Streczyk took his own life—another casualty of D-Day, albeit 13 years after the fact. ★



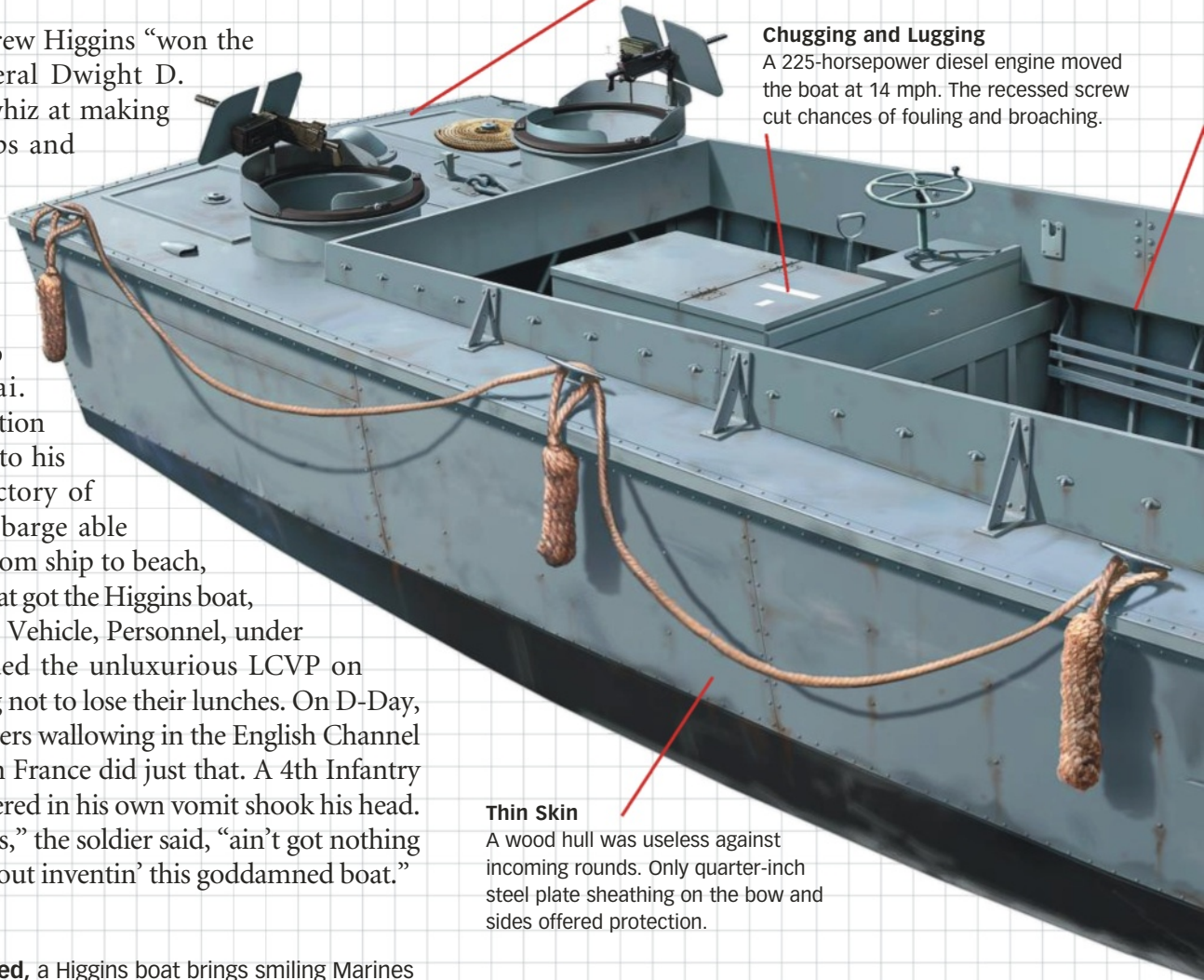
Two days after D-Day, the E-1 draw leading from Easy Red had become a hive of activity, as troops and materiel moved ashore.

Snubnosed Unit Shifter

America's Higgins boat

Louisiana's Andrew Higgins "won the war," said General Dwight D. Eisenhower. A whiz at making boats for swamps and bayous, Higgins studied Marine Victor Krulak's 1937 sketches of watercraft the Japanese used to attack Shanghai. The brief description Higgins phoned to his New Orleans factory of a self-propelled barge able to carry troops from ship to beach, back off, and repeat got the Higgins boat, or Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel, under way. Men boarded the unluxurious LCVP on cargo nets hoping not to lose their lunches. On D-Day, boatloads of soldiers wallowing in the English Channel waiting to land in France did just that. A 4th Infantry Division GI slathered in his own vomit shook his head. "That guy Higgins," the soldier said, "ain't got nothing to be proud of about inventin' this goddamned boat."

With Saipan secured, a Higgins boat brings smiling Marines ashore in late July 1944. Only weeks before, combat there had made casualties of 10,000 Americans, many of whom departed the embattled island aboard LCVPs.



Unfriendly Fire

For defense, two of an LCVP's four crewmen could fire swiveling .30-cal. machine guns.

Chugging and Lugging

A 225-horsepower diesel engine moved the boat at 14 mph. The recessed screw cut chances of fouling and broaching.

Thin Skin

A wood hull was useless against incoming rounds. Only quarter-inch steel plate sheathing on the bow and sides offered protection.

The Competition



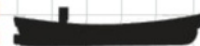
British Landing Craft Assault

Crew: 4 •

Top speed: 12 mph •

Capacity: 36 men or 800 pounds of cargo •

Length: 41 feet 6 inches • Beam: 10 feet • Bow draft: 1 foot 9 inches • Armament: Bren gun, 2 Lewis guns, or 2 2-inch mortars • More often employed by Commonwealth troops, LCAs hauled U.S. Army Rangers to Pointe du Hoc.



Japanese Diahatsu-class 14m

Crew: 12

• Top speed: 15 mph •

Capacity: 70 men, a tank, or 10 tons of cargo

• Length: 47 feet • Beam: 10 feet • Bow draft: 2 feet 7 inches • Armament: 2 light machine guns or 2 25mm anti-aircraft guns • Drawings "Brute" Krulak made of Diahatsus at Shanghai led directly to the innovative Higgins boat.

Swift Boat (Sort of)

Ungainly and plodding in transit, a Higgins boat, once beached, could empty its contents and make its getaway in as little as 180 seconds. Coxswains ran the throttle wide to get over sandbars and land and kept it there after grounding, so the boat stayed in place.

Standing Room Only

A nine-ton LCVP could hold 36 fully equipped troops, 12 men and a jeep, a truck, or four tons of cargo.

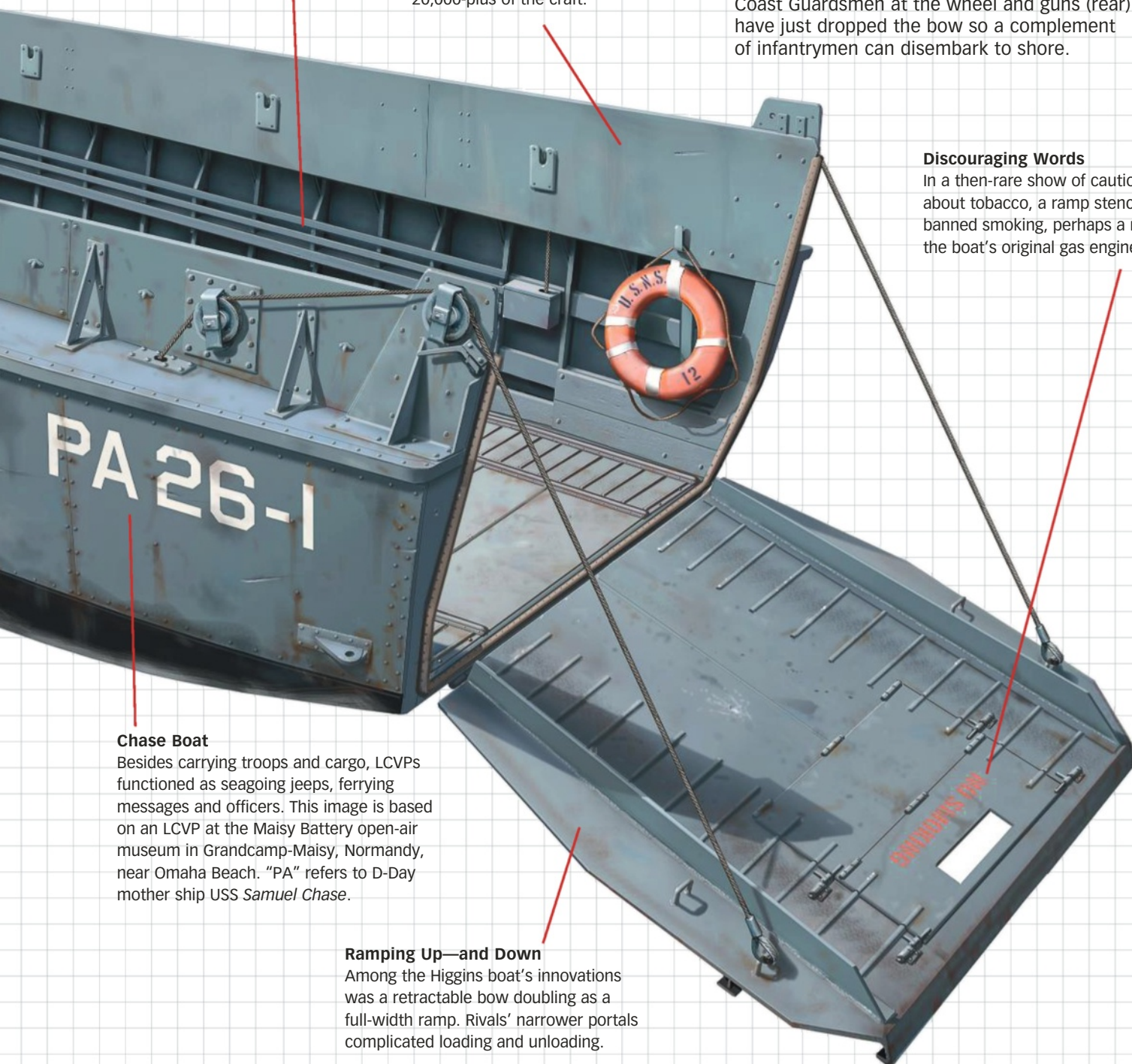
By the Numbers

With a beam of 10 feet 10 inches, a length of 36 feet 3 inches, and a bow draft of 2 feet 2 inches, an LCVP could fit nearly anywhere. Higgins and other contractors built 20,000-plus of the craft.

Training on the East Coast in August 1943, Coast Guardsmen at the wheel and guns (rear) have just dropped the bow so a complement of infantrymen can disembark to shore.

Discouraging Words

In a then-rare show of caution about tobacco, a ramp stencil banned smoking, perhaps a nod to the boat's original gas engine.



Chase Boat

Besides carrying troops and cargo, LCVPs functioned as seagoing jeeps, ferrying messages and officers. This image is based on an LCVP at the Maisy Battery open-air museum in Grandcamp-Maisy, Normandy, near Omaha Beach. "PA" refers to D-Day mother ship USS *Samuel Chase*.

Ramping Up—and Down

Among the Higgins boat's innovations was a retractable bow doubling as a full-width ramp. Rivals' narrower portals complicated loading and unloading.





FOG of WAR

**Aerial combat in the Aleutian Islands
was a murderously soupy affair**

by John M. Curatola

The Imperial Japanese Navy light aircraft carriers *Ryūjō* and *Junyō* were in heavy seas, steaming into the wind 180 miles south of the American naval base at Dutch Harbor, Alaska, as dawn neared on June 3, 1942. To elude U.S. Navy PBY Catalina patrol planes, the fleet, commanded by Rear Admiral Kakuji Kakuta, had hidden in a storm front. Emerging from cover, the carriers each launched a mix of Mitsubishi A6M fighters—called Zeros by the Japanese and Zekes by the Allies—and Nakajima B5N torpedo bombers—Allied codename Kate—whose pilots timed their takeoffs to the pitch of the carriers' bows as they surged vertically with oncoming waves.

A low ceiling, mist, and turbulence kept the 46 aircraft, led by Lieutenant Masayuki Yamaguchi, from flying in tight formation. Weather forced most of the *Junyō* aviators back to that carrier, grateful even to be

The Japanese hit the Aleutians on June 3, 1942, sending carrier planes against Dutch Harbor. The seizure quickly eroded into a harsh fight as American forces, often using PBY Catalinas (inset), ground down the invaders, who finally withdrew in secret.

In the Aleutians the ceiling could vary widely. 'The weather goes up and down like a whore's drawers,' one pilot quipped.

able to find their ship. The remaining planes, mostly from the *Ryūjō*, continued north, reaching Dutch Harbor at 5:45 a.m. in fine weather, including an uncharacteristic 10,000-foot ceiling.

While Yamaguchi was positioning his Kate for a bomb run, Zeros strafed the naval base, where a Catalina was lumbering down the runway for the daily mail flight to Kodiak, some 600 miles east. More than 100 rounds riddled the PBY, knocking out an engine and killing two sailors. The flying boat caught fire, skidded onto a beach, and crashed. Another Catalina, taxiing in the bay, took fire from a Zero but avoided further damage when its pilot flew up a mountain draw and into the concealing mist.

Though the Japanese killed 25 American servicemen and wounded 25, the raid did relatively little material harm. Yamaguchi rallied his force and led it into a rainsquall to evade P-40 Warhawk fighters from nearby Cold Bay. Now the Japanese embarked on a harrowing return flight, as fog, rain, and turbulence forced Yamaguchi to fly only 50 feet above the deadly North Pacific. Sea spray iced the windshield as he endured his Kate's unheated cockpit. Yamaguchi looked down at the white-caps; if he had to ditch, he would live only minutes in those frigid waters. His mood improved when he saw the *Ryūjō* steaming into the wind, ready to take him and his aviators aboard.

Yamaguchi's sortie was emblematic of the 14-month Aleutian Campaign, in which the Japanese and the Americans fought not so much one another as they fought weather, geography, and isolation. Like Yamaguchi's raid, this conflict remains largely forgotten. "Both sides would have done well to have left the Aleutians to the Aleuts," wrote naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison. The stuttering nature of ground actions there meant the battle was defined largely overhead, as opposing naval and air forces groped for a win in a setting so harsh that mere survival was a victory. But this confrontation had unexpected consequences that resonated through the Pacific Theater, especially in the air.

THE APRIL 18, 1942, Doolittle Raid, launched against Tokyo from the carrier USS *Hornet*, had staggered the Japanese; no one knew where those American B-25s had come from. Anxious to protect their northern flank, the Japanese decided that grabbing parts of the Aleutian chain would discourage attacks on the home islands while extending the Empire's security perimeter. Many historians tie the invasion of the Aleutians to Japanese operations at Midway, but the northern campaign was distinct, and not at all the diversion often portrayed.

As the Japanese learned on their first sally, Aleutian weather plays no favorites. The region gets precipitation about 200

days a year. Overcast and thick dense clouds are constant, as are low ceilings, especially in summer. But the ceiling can vary wildly; one American pilot quipped, "The weather goes up and down like a whore's drawers." The wind gusts incessantly, often exceeding 24 knots for more than 24 hours straight, and while elsewhere wind and fog do not generally occur at the same time, in the Aleutians they persist together for days on end. The supreme danger is the williwaw, as the Aleuts call local bursts of hurricane-force wind that can exceed 100 knots. During the conflict williwaws were not only a threat to planes in flight but also to parked aircraft, and were the bane of ground crews. When a williwaw forced the cancellation of a scheduled air mission, a U.S. Navy commander called to inquire.

"Nothing around here flying but a few Quonset huts," the duty officer at Amchitka replied.

Maintenance was a nightmare. At many airfields crews had to work outdoors on makeshift stands. Parts were scarce; crews fabricated what they could and looted hulks. In the cold, hydraulic fluid and oil congealed, grease froze, and crews had to heat engines to get them to turn over. "Don't figure on getting any serviceable planes back from us," Eleventh Air Force Chief of Staff Colonel Everett Davis wrote to air chief General Henry "Hap" Arnold. "We have been hard on them."

After the Dutch Harbor raid, the Americans kept up their search for the enemy, but rain and fog obscured Kakuta's seven-ship armada. The Japanese had sailed some 900 miles past the Kurile Islands, the Empire's north edge, carrying 2,500 soldiers of the Special Naval Landing Force assigned to take Kiska and Attu. The elaborate planning for the invasion included designating one of the unpopulated islands, Akutan, as a haven where Japanese pilots in damaged planes were to land and await rescue.

The same weather that protected the Japanese fleet commander vexed him. In support of the landings, Kakuta had planned airstrikes at American bases on Atka and Adak, further to the west, but had to cancel those raids due to the murk.

While Kakuta was waiting early on June 3 for the clouds to break so his force could attack Dutch Harbor, his ships had shown up on the radar of a patrolling Catalina armed with two 500-pound bombs and a torpedo. Maintaining radar contact from above the overcast, the American pilot dove through the clouds and circled the enemy fleet at 1,500 feet. He was lining up for a run at one of the carriers when a cruiser opened fire, severing the seaplane's left engine oil and fuel lines. The pilot banked, jettisoned his ordnance, and returned to base. Soon after, a dozen B-26s from Umnak and Cold Bay, each carrying



Airmen kick back in a shack on Adak after a 1944 bombing raid on Paramushir, 1,200 miles west in the Kurile Islands—exactly what Japan's 1942 invasion was meant to prevent.

As losses and damage mounted, American aviators began referring to Kiska as the 'PBY elimination center.'

a torpedo, flew to the attack. Again the weather closed in, and only one Marauder pilot located the enemy. He tried to use his torpedo as a bomb, flying low over a carrier and attempting to arm the weapon in-flight, but the tin fish overshot the target.

The afternoon of June 3, the weather cleared again. Kakuta decided to strike Dutch Harbor a second time, and launched Zeros, Kates, and Aichi D3A—"Val"—dive-bombers. This raid killed or injured 43 Americans but, like its predecessor, did little damage. The second strike, however, did have long-term consequences.

THE CARRIER BOMBERS' escort of Zeros included one piloted by Petty Officer First Class Tadayoshi Koga. Before or after hitting Dutch Harbor amid heavy but inaccurate antiaircraft fire, Koga, 19, and two fellow pilots saw a PBY near Egg Island. They downed the Catalina and strafed survivors in a life raft.

At some point a round struck the engine oil return line on Koga's plane. Realizing his Zero was trailing a black spew, he headed for Akutan, his designated ditching spot. He flew east from Dutch Harbor, with his two compatriots flying guard. Thinking he was looking at a level stretch of clear, firm turf,

Forced to work in the open, an American ground crew uses heater hoses and push brooms to clear a PBY's wings of frost.



Koga dropped his flaps, lowered his landing gear, and bore in. But instead of a grassy field, he was setting down on muskeg—boggy ground that masked standing water. The Zero instantly nosed over. The crash snapped Koga's neck, killing him.

Japanese pilots had standing orders to destroy downed aircraft to keep them out of enemy hands, but Koga's companions, circling above, did not want to shoot up his Zero until he climbed out. They reconnoitered until low fuel forced them to return to the *Ryūjō* without having fired a round at the wreck.

Weeks later, a crewman aboard an off-course PBY spotted the upended fighter. A U.S. Navy salvage team recovered the Zero and technicians at North Island, San Diego, repaired it—then dissected the world-class warplane's performance characteristics. (See "Zero for Nothing," page 46.) Analysts discovered several vulnerabilities. When a Zero arced over at the top of a climb, for instance, its engine would cut out because its gravity-feed carburetors would not send fuel into the cylinders. The fighter also handled badly at high speed, lacked pilot armor and self-sealing fuel tanks, and rolled more slowly in right turns. These insights eroded the Zero's mythical reputation and illuminated tactics American pilots could bring to bear against foes flying Zeros.

On June 7, Japanese forces landed on Kiska and Attu, at the Aleutians' western reaches, establishing a toehold on North

America. The 1,250 soldiers of Captain Takeji Ono's landing force easily overpowered a small U.S. Navy weather detachment on Kiska. Ono's men quickly fortified the island's harbor with 75mm cannons and 23mm anti-aircraft artillery. The landings at Attu went equally well, as 1,200 men came ashore at Massacre Bay with no American military to oppose them. However, seizing the islands was only the start; maintaining the resulting 900-mile supply line in this setting would prove brutally taxing.

On June 10 an LB-30 Liberator cargo plane crew over Kiska Harbor found a hole in the clouds and went in for a closer look. The Japanese spotted the American plane and opened fire. A Navy



PBY reported a similar encounter. Unable to mount a ground offensive, the Americans went after the invaders from the air.

Colonel William Eareckson, head of XI Bomber Command, based at Cold Bay, began attacking the Japanese with B-24s and B-17s from fields on Umnak. To reach Kiska, heavy bomber crews flew a 1,200-mile circuit that demanded extra fuel tanks and smaller payloads. The first few bombers went hitless.

Also anxious for a scrap, Captain Leslie Gehres, Commander of Navy Patrol Wing 4, ordered his PBY crews into the fray. The durable Catalina had a 3,000-mile range and could carry 4,000 pounds of bombs or torpedoes, but was an unlikely combat plane. It had a top speed of only 200 mph and for protection only a few .30-caliber and .50-caliber machine guns. Even so, Gehres threw his planes into a 48-hour bombing marathon. The “Kiska Blitz” saw his pilots employ unusual techniques in their efforts to overcome the terrain, the weather, and Japanese defenses: using clouds as protection, the bomb-laden PBYs would dive through holes in the undercast, drop their ordnance, and pull out at only 500 to 1,000 feet hoping to find cover again in the clouds.

After months of fruitless North Pacific patrols that could easily exceed 10 hours, many U.S. Navy fliers welcomed this mission. Others pilloried Gehres for risking their lives this way. When Gehres directly ordered an airborne PBY to attack the Japanese fleet at Kiska, the radio operator went to the pilot with the message in one hand and his .45 caliber pistol in the other. “You aren’t going to do this,” the radioman asked. “Are you?”

A B-24 Liberator bomber noses into the deck in the foul weather that was a near-constant feature of life in the Aleutians.

From June 11 to June 13, more than 20 PBYs shuttled constantly over the 650 miles separating Kiska from Atka, where at Nazan Bay the crew of the seaplane tender USS *Gillis* did yeoman service refueling and rearming Catalinas. Over Kiska, pilots dove through the overcast to drop bombs amid anti-aircraft fire that could be punitively accurate. One PBY completed a run with 200 holes from flak or small-arms fire, an engine shot out, and a missing aileron—then hightailed it for the clouds hanging at 500 to 1,500 feet. In addition to Japanese ordnance, crews endured fatigue. Airmen collapsed in bunks that *Gillis* crewmen voluntarily vacated. One pilot flew more than 19 hours in a 24-hour period. As losses and damage mounted, aviators began referring to Kiska as the “PBY elimination center.”

The three-day long-distance bombing spree ended only when the *Gillis* ran out of aviation fuel and ammunition. The blitz, which inflicted a few hits on enemy ships, did destroy three four-engined Kawanishi H6K “Mavis” flying boats, as well as damage anti-aircraft emplacements on Kiska. Overriding complaints that the bombing marathon had been a waste, Gehres kept up the raids, albeit at a reduced pace, and against resistance by Japanese pilots in newly delivered Nakajima A6M2-N “Rufe” amphibious fighters. (See “Up on the Rufe,” page 45.) During those six weeks, Navy Patrol Wing 4 lost another four PBYs and 19 men. By the

Willing to fly in weather the Japanese loathed, the Americans were tightening a noose around their foes.



A May 1943 sortie by American bombers scored a direct hit, destroying a hangar on Kiska housing Rufe amphibious fighters.

end of July, the wing had lost a third of its flying boats.

As the Japanese hunkered in their new holdings, the Americans, hamstrung by distance, weather, and the limits of combat power, turned to harassment bombing of Kiska and Attu. They also sent air and surface attacks against Japanese convoys supplying the lodgments. To beat the overcast, XI Bomber Command's Eareckson had crews attack the enemy at Kiska by working from a single reference point and using time-distance-heading calculations. Flying for a set time from a fixed point, such as a peak, allowed a pilot to reach his objective without needing to see it. These dead-reckoning runs did little damage, but they kept the Japanese off-balance, interrupted air-field work, and occasionally hit a ship in the harbor or a building.

Weather permitting—a rarity—heavy bombers could attack from the high altitudes that they were built for, but did better coming in low. On September 14, a dozen B-24s escorted by 14 P-38 and 14 P-39 fighters flew from a new American

base on Adak and approached Kiska at wave-top—so far down Japanese gunners could not lower their 75mm barrels enough to get a bead on them. The Liberators sank two ships, set three others afire, damaged midget submarines in dry dock as well as a number of buildings, and killed some 200 Japanese soldiers. The P-38s strafed and damaged seven Rufe fighters anchored in the bay. American pilots quickly dispatched another five Rufes that got aloft. From then on Eareckson had his fighters suppress Japanese anti-aircraft fire while his bombers delivered low-flying blows.

The Japanese campaign, at first successful, began to drown in operational costs. In June 1942 the seaplane carrier *Kimikawa Maru* had delivered 18 Rufe fighters to Kiska;

by early August, only two were airworthy, as was only one of six huge Mavises at that island. American hectoring had Rufe pilots flying as many six times a day, sapping efficiency and proficiency. And the Americans were not only willing to fly in weather the Japanese loathed but were also tightening a noose of submarines, picket ships, and aircraft around Kiska and Attu, cutting off supplies. Japanese morale sank in fall 1942, when a freighter whose cargo included letters from home reached Kiska only to fall prey to a PBY's bombs before troops got their mail.

In the second half of 1942, air-war attrition on both sides worsened due to weather and combat. Between June and October, the Eleventh Air Force claimed 45 Japanese aircraft. That fall, the Japanese lost dozens of Rufes and several ships to American attacks. In early October, when the Japanese finally found and attacked the American air base at Adak, their largest raid could only muster three planes. Distance and conditions accounted for most losses. Between July and December the Eleventh Air Force lost 72 planes, only nine of them from combat. In January the unit lost another 11 aircraft, none in combat.

Finally American planners scheduled an assault on Attu

for May 11, 1943. Escort carrier *USS Nassau* arrived off Kiska with 30 F4F-4 Wildcats, but instead of providing air cover the fighters served as observation and naval-gunfire spotting craft. With Japanese air power in the Aleutians withered, pre-invasion strikes at Attu's enemy garrisons went unhampered.

But air superiority meant nothing. On D-day, the weather was horrible. Fog and clouds socked in the objective from 2,000 feet to the ground. Early in the invasion, airstrikes were few. On May 14, three Wildcat pilots attempting to provide air support dodged beneath the overcast, flew up Jarmin Pass—and were slammed into the mountainside by a williwaw. With 11 of 20 critical days of the assault not flyable, U.S. Army troops recaptured Attu largely without help from above.

HOWEVER, THE JAPANESE did manage to attack from the air. On May 22, a dozen G4M1 "Betty" bombers flying from Paramushir in the northern Kuriles strafed and launched torpedoes at American vessels patrolling the entrance to Holtz Bay, Attu. The torpedoes missed; both ships had only minor strafing damage. The next day, 16 Bettys were making another pass at Attu when a Catalina crew spotted them and summoned five P-38s from Amchitka. Intercepted by the Lightnings, the Betty pilots jettisoned their loads and closed formation. P-38 pilots claimed five, perhaps seven Bettys against two Lightnings lost. The Japanese launched no more airstrikes. By May 30, American forces had secured Attu; within a week they built an airfield at Alexei Point. Now American bombers could strike the Kuriles, and raids began on that extremity of the Japanese homeland.

The Americans now eyed Kiska and its estimated enemy garrison of 5,000. An invasion was set for August 15, 1943, and in mid-July airstrikes began. August 4 marked American fliers' busiest day: in 134 sorties they dropped 152 tons of bombs. Reconnaissance flights showed no Japanese vehicle movement or effort to repair the runway on Kiska. As on Attu, the D-day weather scrubbed air support, but none was required. In June the Japanese had realized their situation in the Aleutians was untenable and decided Attu's 5,000 troops should defend the Kuriles instead. Unknown to the Americans, on July 28-29, using two light cruisers and five submarines, the Japanese secretly and efficiently evacuated the entire garrison without a loss.

Even though it slid into the shadows of history, the battle for the Aleutians did affect the course of the war beyond improving intelligence about the Zero. Mounting a defense against the threat of invasion from the north and bombings in the Kuriles kept some 500 planes and 40,000 Japanese troops far from the

Up on the Rufe



Pontoons and floats compromised the amphibious Zero variant, but skilled pilots could wield it very effectively.

Japanese forces on Kiska and Attu lacked airfields, but they had alternatives; no other wartime power built as many specialized seaplanes—including a fighter. Based on the Mitsubishi Zero, the Nakajima A6M2-N—Allied codename "Rufe"—had a 14-cylinder radial engine capable of 270 mph at 16,500 feet, with a range of 1,100 miles. The amphibian, which in place of landing gear had a pontoon and floats, retained the Zero's two 7.7mm machine guns and two 20mm cannons. Wing racks held two 132-pound bombs.

The Rufe was doughty and deft. On September 15, 1942, Kiska-based Petty Officer Second Class Giichi Sasaki was credited with taking out four—perhaps five—enemy planes, later sharing in five more kills before being killed himself. In their last Aleutians dogfight, Rufes downed two P-38 Lightnings. Of 35 Aleutians-based Rufes, 12 were lost in combat that cost 10 Japanese pilots their lives. The rest fell victim to Allied air attacks or weather before Japan evacuated Kiska. —Jon Guttman

fighting elsewhere in the Pacific, and an empire chronically short on men and material could hardly afford the price of keeping Kiska and Attu in a conflict in which nature would be the true victor. Despite the Aleutians' limited utility, the enemy invasion demanded that the United States eject the Japanese interlopers from its soil. Having satisfied their moral imperative, the Americans then took on the cost in lives and resources of bombing sorties further west. As Samuel Eliot Morison suggests, the entire sideshow might have been avoided. The Japanese assaulted the Aleutians in part to discourage American encroachment on the Kuriles—triggering an American counterattack that culminated in the very action Japan sought to preclude. ★

Zero for Nothing

Japan's Aleutians adventure had many costs, but the most resonant was a fatal error that dropped a nearly intact specimen of its top fighter into enemy hands

The Mitsubishi A6M Zero once reigned supreme in the Pacific air war. Flown by combat-callused aviators, the fast, agile fighter had a nonpareil image—until a freak accident brought the Japanese plane's liabilities to light. That break came in 1942 when the Imperial Navy invaded the Aleutian Islands with a force that included carrier-borne A6Ms. (See "Fog of War," page 38.) In the opening raid at Dutch Harbor, American rounds struck Petty Officer First Class Tadayoshi Koga's plane. Unable to make it back to his carrier, Koga attempted to land on a vacant island. He crashed and died but his plane flew again—in enemy hands. Rebuilding the captured craft and studying its design and performance, American engineers were able to learn what made the Zero tick—and how to defeat it. As American aircraft, ordnance, and aerial combat technique improved, this stream of invaluable intelligence spelled doom for a previously peerless warplane. —Michael Dolan



DEAD MAN FLYING ▲◀

A plane thought to be Petty Officer First Class Tadayoshi Koga's Zero (above) trails oil after attacking Dutch Harbor on June 3, 1942. Within minutes Koga would die, leaving his fighter to undergo intense American scrutiny. Lieutenant William N. Thies (left), whose crew spied the defunct A6M, stands with white-jacketed Captain Leslie Gehres, commander of the PBY Catalina amphibious bomber wing that was defending the islands.

FINDERS KEEPERS >

American personnel swarm the Zero on Akutan Island on July 11, 1942. Koga might have lived if he had bailed in, but the plane flipped, breaking his neck. After burying Koga nearby, Thies (standing behind the prop) and fellow searchers recovered the Zero for analysis.

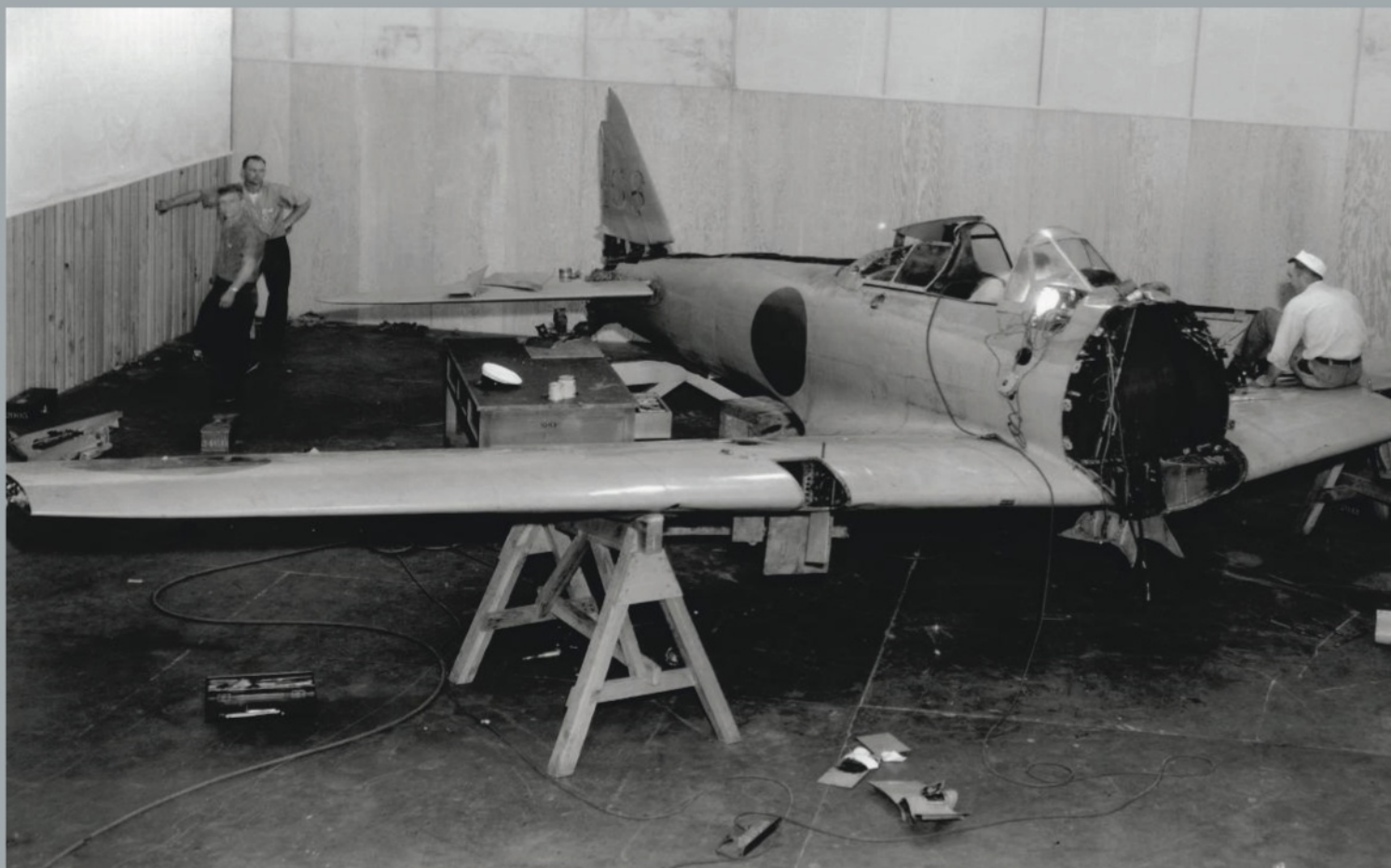
**THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN >**

Lumber girdles the Zero's midsection as a crane operator hoists the plane onto a barge to begin its journey to California, where technicians will disassemble the plane, assess its design and construction, and put it back into flying trim with American test pilots at the controls.

**LOSERS WEEPERS <**

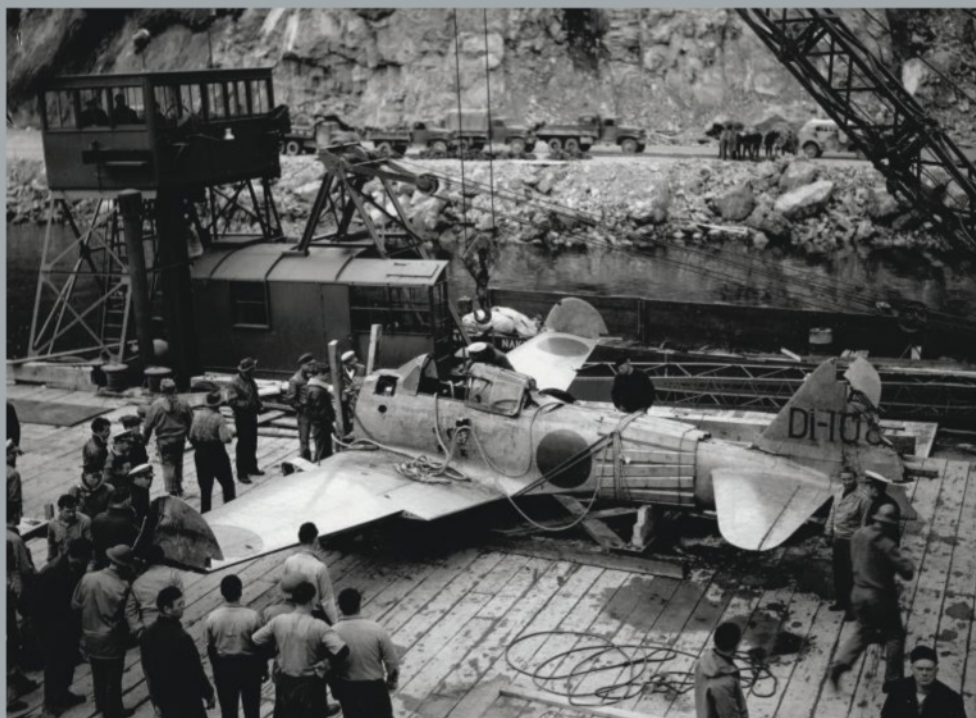
In 1942, when this photo was taken, the risk-loving Koga, 19, had vaulted from the Naval Flight Training Corps as one of 25 cadets picked to fly fighter planes. Joining the carrier *Ryūjō*'s air group, Koga saw his first service as a pilot in the Philippines, after which the *Ryūjō* sailed north to join the Aleutian invasion.





▲ REVERSE ENGINEERING

In San Diego, California, navy technicians strip down Zero 21, as they called the captured plane. The engine and 7.7mm nose guns are off, as are both 20mm wing cannons. Analysis suggested enemy pilots used small-bore rounds to gauge range to targets, then brought the heavier-caliber ammunition to bear.



ALREADY LEAKING SECRETS ▲

Hauled off Akutan and barged to Dutch Harbor, A6M2 4593 demonstrates how the wingtips on carrier-based Zeros hinged up. This let the fighters squeeze onto carriers' elevators, yet preserved their handling. Koga's Zero was the first American engineers were able to dissect.

MAGIC NUMBERS ➤

A Zero's supercharged 1,130-horsepower, 14-cylinder Nakajima Sakae radial engine gave the 5,555-pound fighter its deadly speed. The cowling cooled so well the plane got by with a smaller air intake, enhancing aerodynamics. The crash that killed pilot Tadayoshi Koga damaged only one of his plane's three prop blades.

SEEING STARS ▼

Over California, the Zero, now wearing U.S. Army Air Forces markings, flew beautifully, according to a test pilot. The A6M's canopy offered excellent visibility in mock combat duels with Mustangs, Wildcats, Lightnings, and Corsairs.



D-DAY 70

OVERLOOKED



A black and white portrait of Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan. He is a middle-aged man with a mustache, wearing a military uniform with a pilot's wing and a shoulder patch. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

By David T. Zabecki

OVERSEER

A forgotten British general built the plan that brought Operation Overlord to fruition

In a bravura display of military insight and management, Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan spent most of 1943 planning the details of the Allied invasion that eventually took place at Normandy on June 6, 1944.

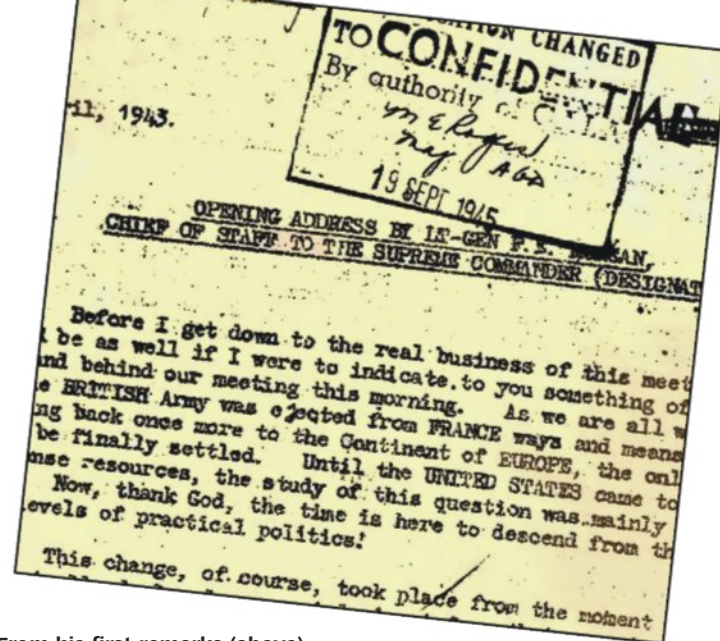
NEVER IN HISTORY HAD so great a mission begun under such unusual circumstances.

On March 23, 1943, British Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan accepted the position of Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC). Morgan's orders: nothing less than planning the invasion of western Europe. However, the Allies had no Supreme Allied Commander, and would not have one until January 1944, when General Dwight D. Eisenhower arrived in London. So Morgan started his enormous task in a militarily unthinkable position—as a chief of staff with no superior to direct his efforts. All the seasoned military man had to go on was vague, constricting guidance from the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff. Hemmed in by these limitations and beset by competing national priorities, Morgan and his staff nonetheless developed a plan that solved 90 percent of the problems facing the Allies on the coast of France.

Morgan achieved this amazing feat against terrible odds. The Americans and the British were in a shotgun marriage. The British, who saw themselves as the senior ally, knew American resources were bound to tip the balance. Influential Americans saw the British as war-weary, and some, such as Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest J. King, were outright Anglophobes. Prime Minister Winston Churchill and General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, wanted to wear Germany down before attacking Europe. President Franklin Roosevelt and U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall were avid to vault the English Channel; two cross-Channel operations, Bolero and Roundup, had already been planned and shelved. In this fraught environment, Morgan kept a cool head, displaying extraordinary insight, deftness, and diligence—and in the process became one of World War II's forgotten heroes.

TALL, FAIR-HAIRED FREDDIE Morgan, commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1913, was called back from India when the First World War erupted. On the Western Front, a German artillery round badly wounded him, but he stayed in uniform, rising to brigadier based on service in the Raj from 1919 to 1935. In the 1940 Battle of France, Morgan led the non-tank units of the 1st Armoured Division. After Dunkirk, he commanded the 55th Infantry Division, then I Corps.

In 1942 planners preparing the invasion of North Africa wanted to ready a parry should the Germans respond by driving through Spain, seizing Gibraltar, and trying to block the Straits. Morgan, 49, got orders to form I Corps into a task force to prevent that. Asked to meet his new boss, an American he had never heard of, Morgan dutifully reported to Norfolk House at 31 St. James's Square, London, the seven-story building where Operation Torch was taking form. In an office there Morgan found Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower. "I was met with that grin which the world now knows so well and a welcome that could not have been more charming," Morgan wrote



From his first remarks (above),
Morgan evinced a measured outlook that
helped keep hundreds of planners focused.

in a 1950 memoir, *Overture to Overlord*. "Right from the first moment it was clear that here was a man that one would gladly follow wherever he should go."

Morgan had entered a bewildering maze. Though collaborative, Torch was running on an American model, and the American military system differed sharply from Britain's. Neither side understood the other—even when it came to writing. To Morgan, the Torch operations order embodied George Bernard Shaw's quip about Britons and Americans being two peoples divided by a common language. "The words were all pure English, but the whole document as it stood meant not a thing to any of us," Morgan wrote later. "So we began by getting ourselves instructed in U.S. staff language and procedures."

Torch succeeded, the Germans stayed out of Spain, and Morgan's task force dispersed, leaving him a corps commander without a corps. At Casablanca in January 1943, Roosevelt and Marshall overrode British reluctance and forced a decision to invade northwest Europe in 1944. Since the projected attack was more than a year away, FDR and Churchill held off naming a commander—expected, along with his chief of staff, to be British. However, commander or no commander, planning had to start immediately, and someone had to shepherd that work.

In March 1943 General Hastings Ismay, Principal Secretary of Britain's War Cabinet, summoned the underemployed Morgan. Ismay handed his old friend a mountain of files addressing cross-Channel warfare, including the Bolero and Roundup plans. Ismay, who represented Churchill to the British Chiefs of Staff Committee, told Morgan to digest the stack and write a memorandum for the Chiefs on how he would invade Europe.

"No hurry, old boy," Ismay said. "Tomorrow will do."

Morgan delivered on time—and was not surprised when the Chiefs requested another pass. In his redraft, the author, who had admired Eisenhower's integrated approach to Torch, strongly urged "complete British-American amalgamation of



Besides delivering what the Allies had expected, Overlord planners also devised surprising innovations, such as artificial harbors, called "Mulberries," which even had their own breakwaters (above). Morgan's crew of planners likewise went above and beyond stated requirements, minutely studying far more than the originally requested 25 miles of beach. That analysis permitted the last-minute expansion of the invasion to include what became known as Utah Beach (right).





Recently named Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower studies a landing mockup with British and American officers.

staff, effort, troops, and everything else from the very beginning.” All branches of both nations’ services had to buy in, he declared. When the Allies chose a supreme commander, Morgan said, he should inherit a fully developed force structure, an effective command and control architecture, a reliable supply system, and a solid yet adaptable plan. In his memo, Morgan likened the chief of staff in this setting to St. John the Baptist—a true believer proselytizing on behalf of a celestial figure yet to arrive. “Quite frankly, I could not see myself in the part of the character that I outlined,” he wrote later. “I had in my mind’s eye one who had borne much more of the heat and burden than had I. But seemingly, I had talked myself into it.”

As the Chiefs were mulling, Morgan dined with the Churchills. The evening included billiards with the Prime Minister’s two-year-old grandson and watching the new documentary, *Desert Victory*. Afterward, Churchill told the War Office that his dinner guest “would do.”

On April 13, 1943, the day the Allies confirmed Morgan as chief of staff to a nonexistent supreme allied commander, the United Kingdom was host to only a single American combat division. Morgan’s British masters were pessimistic not only about the invasion itself but the collaboration it would involve. “Well, there it is; it won’t work,” Brooke told him. “But you must bloody well make it.”

THE NEW STAFF CHIEF and his staff—at first, four enlisted men—colonized an office at Norfolk House that the self-effacing Morgan recognized as the very room in which he first met Eisenhower to discuss Torch. “The equipment consisted of a couple of desks and chairs,” he said. “And we were lucky enough to find a few sheets of paper and a pencil that someone had dropped on the floor.”

Morgan had to make a shotgun marriage into a true partnership. He had to defuse his countrymen’s doubts; with Americans, the task was one, he said, of “keeping their bubbling enthusiasm within practical bounds.” (See “Unvarnished Allies,” page 56.) Another problem was the difference in how the British and the American systems conceived the staff chief’s role. A British chief of staff was one of two principals—the chief of staff dealt with operations and intelligence; the chief administration officer handled personnel and logistics. An American chief of staff controlled all administrative and operational staff functions and, as his boss’s alter ego, almost always had authority to speak for the commander. To the British, COSSAC—the acronym quickly came to mean not only the individual but also the organization—had authority disproportionate to his duties; not so to the Americans. Morgan embraced the American mode. Fortunately, U.S. Army Major General Ray Barker, assigned as his deputy, was a New York native who had been in England since the year before and was a confirmed Anglophile. “It was thanks entirely to his wise guidance and tutelage that I soon began to find myself accepted by the American authorities,” Morgan wrote later.

Except for the tail end of the last war and the occasional polo match, American and British officers had scarcely interacted. Morgan meant to change that. Ignoring nationality, he formed working groups that he populated relying on his familiarity with Britain’s officer corps and Barker’s knowledge of America’s. They also enlisted civilians—bankers, microfilm operators, agriculturists, journalists, foresters—“each the master of some technique that was needed to help get us where we wanted to go.”

On April 23, 1943, the Combined Chiefs of Staff communicated a planning directive for the invasion that was as broad as the Atlantic: “Our object is to defeat the German fighting forces in North-West Europe. To this end the Combined Chiefs of Staff will endeavor to assemble the strongest possible forces (subject to prior commitments in other theatres) in constant readiness to re-enter the Continent if German resistance is weakened to the required extent in 1943.” The Chiefs set strict limits: only three divisions would land, on a 25-mile front, with one airborne division also participating. The plan had to address displaced civilians and POWs—both captured Germans and liberated Allied personnel—restoration of liberated nations’ democratic institutions; and occupation and governance of a devastated Germany. Morgan had until July 1943 to deliver his plan.

Starting from the old Bolero and Roundup documents, Morgan’s team picked for the landing site not the obvious—and heavily defended—Pas-de-Calais, but the Caen-Cotentin

region, which was more remote but within Allied planes’ combat radius. The 25-mile landing zone would run from Vierville-sur-Mer in the west, near the Vire River, to Lion-sur-Mer near the Orne River in the east. Once lodged, troops would turn toward the Cotentin Peninsula and within 14 days seize the port of Cherbourg. The paratroopers would drop on and take Caen.

Analysts drilled into landing zone studies with exacting precision. Thousands of hours of intelligence gathering and review went into such data as the slope of the sea-bottom near shore; tide speed and strength; high- and low-tide lines; soil makeup and natural and man-made obstacles at the littoral; targets for naval gunners and pilots; signal communications circuits at the beachhead and inland; organizing a beachhead under fire; the strand’s capacity for stockpiling supplies; enemy defenses and troop concentrations at and behind the beaches; roads and other corridors inland; and areas inland useful for cover and staging.

And the planners went big. Before studying the stipulated 25 miles, Morgan and his planners, imagining the front might widen, scrutinized the area miles west beyond the Vire that became Utah Beach and, east of the Orne, a strand code-named “Band” but not used—in all, 60 miles of French shore. They did the same for the drop zones, putting adjacent locales under the lens in case more airborne divisions were allocated.

The lodgment would need a port capable of supporting 26 to 30 divisions engaged in combat, and simultaneously able to bring in three to five divisions a month of follow-on forces. Even if Allied troops took Cherbourg on schedule, the battle would disable facilities there. That brought the planners to the problem of supply over open beaches. Joked Commodore John Hughes-Hallet of the Royal Navy, “Well, all I can say is that if we can’t capture a port we must take one with us.” From his jest grew the Mulberry harbors, the manmade port facilities that rank as one of history’s greatest military logistical engineering feats.

MORGAN DROVE HIS PEOPLE genially but relentlessly. He maintained rooms at the nearby and opulent Mount Royal Hotel but often slept at Norfolk House. He convened subordinates mornings and evenings but, to keep them moving forward, had principal planners meet weekly. He apologized for the hours; when he inevitably kept his shorthand typist late, he had his driver ferry the young servicewoman home. To foster amity, Morgan had a mess installed on the top floor at Norfolk House. Posh meals for top-level planners encouraged what he called “discussion during digestion.” Democratic celebrations also occurred. After the initial Overlord plan went to the British Chiefs, a party rocked the block: “The normally rigidly repressed atmosphere of St. James’s Square was shattered to a thousand pieces by the onslaught first of a British dance band and later in the night by one of those red-hot combinations that America seems to own in such numbers,” Morgan recalled. Having filled Norfolk House, the staff—which would exceed 900—expanded around the corner into 80 Pall Mall.

Separately, the Combined Chiefs revived plans, mothballed since Anzio, to invade the south of France; the action would occur in tandem with Overlord. Morgan had to juggle this and myriad other factors while maintaining perspective on strategic concerns, such as how to enlist governments-in-exile and resistance movements in recivilizing Europe. Hearing of American warrior-diplomat Anthony Biddle, Roosevelt's liaison to Europe's exiled leaders and their anti-Nazi undergrounds, he wondered how he might pry Biddle loose to join COSSAC.

On July 27, 1943, the Chiefs approved Morgan's plan, but no longer was British command a given. The United Kingdom was running short of men, and in the long run the majority of Overlord troops would be GIs. Talk arose of supreme command going to Marshall, who clearly desired the job. Morgan wondered if Marshall would keep him on. "The degree of intimacy that must exist between Commander and Chief of Staff could surely not be achieved across the frontier of even the closest alliance," Morgan later wrote. When Marshall invited him to Washington, Morgan hoped the journey would speed a decision. "I wanted a commander," he recalled thinking as he made his first trip to the United States in October 1943. "And I proposed to assume from the start that this was to be General Marshall."

Marshall dashed that hope; domestic politics required he

remain U.S. Army Chief of Staff. Morgan asked the Combined Chiefs for interim supreme command powers; American representative Admiral Ernest King was amenable, but the British refused. All right, Morgan said—how about a British deputy supreme commander? Oh, the Chiefs said, that had to be decided at "the highest levels;" in other words, FDR. So Morgan distilled his wishes: more GIs, Marshall in charge, Biddle to COSSAC. At the White House, Roosevelt—who had a slight cold—jibed that his guest was on the spot. "You see, General, that I have risen from my bed of sickness on purpose to see you," the president said. "So what you have to say had better be important."

"Mr. President, I don't want to overtax you in your delicate health and will be brief," Morgan replied. "All I need of you is your Army, your General Marshall, and your Ambassador Biddle."

"The United States Army you can have tomorrow, if you can tell me what you want it for and if the reasons are good," FDR said. "I doubt very much if General Marshall can be spared, and my Ambassador Biddle—you certainly can't have him. I need him."

Morgan wanted more U.S. Navy muscle for the invasion. Against American friends' advice, he buttonholed King. As the naval chief listened, Morgan asked him to divert warships and landing craft from the Pacific to Overlord. King calmly explained why that would not happen. Morgan wrote later that when he emerged from King's office smiling, head still attached, American officers assured him that, "had I been either an American soldier or a British sailor, I might well have not been seen again!"

Back in London, Morgan took heart—"It seemed to confirm that the American half of me was doing all right"—but lamented the skepticism he felt at home: "The British custom is almost invariably to mistrust the man on the spot." He and Barker set about remaking Overlord to fit the leadership they now expected, so they were ready when, with Churchill's assent, Roosevelt selected as Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower, then commanding Allied troops in the Mediterranean. Bucking Marshall, Eisenhower said he would be bringing along his current chief of staff, Major General Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith.

By letter, Morgan assured Eisenhower that all was ready in London and that he was prepared to serve in any capacity. In reply, Eisenhower made clear how important Beetle Smith was to him and how key Morgan was to the undertaking. "My present thought is that originally [Smith] would enter COSSAC as your deputy until he could absorb the background that you now possess and gain the benefit of all your experience in the tough job you have had," Eisenhower wrote. "After that I have been assured by [Brooke] that there is always an important job awaiting you, and I gained the impression that he had in mind something like a corps command."

Before coming to London, Eisenhower had to go to Washington. He sent Smith ahead and authorized Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, now Overlord ground forces commander, to act in his absence. Montgomery and Smith decided Morgan's plan was too small. They recommended that at least

Unvarnished Allies

In his droll and penetrating 1950 memoir, *Overture to Overlord*, Sir Frederick Morgan hilariously contrasted the American and British characters. Suppose, he said, someone suggested the same action to a representative of each nation's military:



AMERICAN: "Yes, sir, we certainly agree with your proposition. We will deliver what you demand up to not less than 100 percent. You bet. And as for your 'skedule,' it's a cinch. The boys will be there a week ahead of time. This is right up our alley. Why, this little outfit of mine, when we were 'way back in Texas....'"



BRITISH: "My dear boy, is all this really necessary? Well, if it really is, couldn't we do it just as well with half the bother? At any rate we can't get anywhere near the numbers you want. Ninety per cent of your figure would be the absolute limit. And as for time, I don't see how it can possibly be done in less than at least a week longer than you seem prepared to give us. If you insist, we'll have a crack at it, only don't expect too much of a show. But we will do our best."



five seaborne and three airborne divisions land along 60 miles of beach—an enlargement Eisenhower endorsed. With Ike's arrival in London on January 15, 1944, the COSSAC organization ceased to exist. Most of its personnel stayed on as the nucleus of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). New staff members included Anthony Biddle, now SHAEF's emissary to the captive nations.

On February 1, 1944, the Chiefs approved the larger invasion. Planning the additional actions delayed the assaults—but only by five weeks, thanks to Morgan's prescient study of adjacent beaches and drop zones. The challenge became where to find additional naval lift, especially landing craft—a knot sliced by postponing the assault in southern France to later in the summer.

THERE WAS ANOTHER MATTER: what to do with Morgan. COSSAC was gone. Smith, Eisenhower's number two, asked informally about a corps command for him in Overlord. Brooke and Montgomery vetoed that idea. Morgan "has hurt himself with Brooke by his square dealing with our people," Smith told Eisenhower.

Ever a team player, Morgan set aside ego. He was a three-star general; Smith was in his final days as a two-star. Then, as now, a three-star willing to work for a two-star was as rare as hen's teeth.

Morgan (second from left) and other Allied figures celebrate Germany's May 7, 1945, surrender at Rheims, France. He went on to head United Nations relief efforts in the former Reich.

But Morgan chewed the bullet. "I was conscious of a strong paternal feeling towards this Operation Overlord that was about to come to birth," he wrote. "If, by any mischance, things went wrong, I had no illusions as to where as much as possible of the blame would be placed and I felt it would be better to be on the spot alongside those who had borne the heat and burden of the planning."

Soon after the Allies successfully invaded Europe, King George knighted Morgan, who as Smith's deputy served effectively to campaign's end and, after Germany surrendered, headed United Nations relief efforts there. "There is nothing too good to say for the work he did," Eisenhower wrote in a SHAEF memo dated August 9, 1944. "Moreover, there is no possible way of exaggerating the complexity of his task and the difficulties he had to overcome."

Morgan retired from the army in 1946 and in the early 1950s was controller of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority. But by the time he died, on March 19, 1967, Sir Frederick Edgeworth Morgan was a completely forgotten man.

He deserves better. ★

Exercise in Tragedy

Ready to give their all on D-Day, hundreds of GIs and sailors lost their lives rehearsing for the landings

By Craig L. Symonds

In at least one respect, the name Slapton Sands is a misnomer. There is no sand at all on the beach at the edge of Lyme Bay, off the Devon coast—one of several southern English beaches where the Allies were rehearsing for the Normandy invasion. Like the beaches the Americans would be targeting across the English Channel, the beach at Slapton is composed of what geologists call shingle: billions of small, wave-polished black and gray pebbles.

The site has other physical characteristics similar to Omaha Beach and, especially, Utah Beach—making it ideal for the D-Day rehearsals that began in January 1944 and continued into April, as the days lengthened and the Channel waters grew slightly less frigid.

In late April, Rear Admiral Don P. Moon, commander of Force U, the task group of naval forces assigned to Utah Beach, and Major General J. Lawton “Lightning Joe” Collins, commander of VII Corps, a First Army assault corps targeting Utah Beach, prepared to conduct one last full-scale, eight-day rehearsal, code-named Exercise Tiger. The plan was for Moon’s amphibians to put the bulk of Collins’ VII Corps ashore at Slapton Sands, from which VII Corps would advance to “capture” the town of Okehampton, 25 miles inland. In order to simulate as closely as possible the actual Utah Beach landings, now only five weeks away, the beach at Slapton Sands was prepared with two lines of steel tetrahedra and barbed wire. Even live mines were put in place.

Moon’s force involved a mix of American landing craft and Royal Navy warships. Such an arrangement was not novel or even noteworthy, though there were some awkward aspects to it. One was that in the Royal Navy, the flag officers serving as commander-in-chief Plymouth and commander-in-chief Portsmouth, based respectively at those Channel ports, had full authority over all vessels, of any nationality, when they were in port. Only when the



D-DAY 70

Fully outfitted troops and vessels assemble at dawn in southern England to rehearse for D-Day. The exercises—this one in January 1944—grew ever larger and more realistic to simulate the feel of real war.



ships cleared the harbor did command authority shift to the task force commanders.

In addition, the American rear admiral commanding the Western task force, Alan G. Kirk, was concerned that his zone of authority did not extend to the French city of Cherbourg, at the end of the Cotentin Peninsula, which remained the responsibility of the commander-in-chief Plymouth. That worried him because it was from Cherbourg that any German surface units would sortie to assail his right flank.

Some weeks before, Admiral Kirk had sent his chief of staff, Rear Admiral Arthur Struble, to ask the Allied naval commander, British admiral Bertram H. Ramsay, to change command boundaries. Struble may have picked a bad day, for there was a palpable sense of annoyance in Ramsay's reaction. Ramsay listened to Kirk's request for a change, then blurted out: "You Yanks want everything. No, I won't do it. They're going to stay where they are." And they did. These arrangements created a certain ambiguity about the Allied naval command structure and a potential for confusion—and even, as it proved, for catastrophe.

Shells fell among the landing craft, causing a number of 'friendly fire' casualties. It wasn't a good showing—and it was about to get worse.

Almost all of Moon's Force U took part in Exercise Tiger. That included 21 LSTs—Landing Ships, Tank; 28 LCI(L)s—Landing Craft, Infantry (Large); and 65 LCTs—Landing Craft, Tank; plus nearly a hundred smaller vessels and the usual escort of warships. Moon and Collins watched the exercise from Moon's flagship, the attack transport *Bayfield*. Other interested viewers watched from shore. That audience included much top brass, among them Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Kirk sent Moon a short note to let him know him that Eisenhower was coming, and like all naval messages, it contained what was called padding at the beginning and the end of the message to confuse enemy code breakers. Such padding consisted of nonsense phrases picked at random by the radio-man from a thick book. In this case, the padding added to the end of Kirk's message was: "No luck."

As the various elements of Force U gathered off Slapton Sands early on the morning of April 27, Moon learned that at least one LCT flotilla was behind schedule. Careful as always, he decided to postpone the landing by an hour to ensure that all the pieces of the invasion force were in place. But Moon

made that call at 6:25 for a landing that was scheduled to begin at 6:30. In a complex exercise with army, navy, and air elements, that abrupt notice invited confusion. Some of the Higgins boats, having taken on troops from the transports, began heading for the beach in accordance with the original schedule when the British heavy cruiser *Hawkins*, adhering to the revised schedule, opened fire on the beach. Shells fell among the landing craft, and caused a number of "friendly fire" casualties. The kink was quickly straightened out and the forces eventually got ashore, but it was not an especially good showing. And it was about to get much worse.

The second-wave assault force for Exercise Tiger, scheduled to land the next day, consisted of eight fully-loaded LSTs collectively dubbed convoy T-4. The commodore of the convoy was U.S. Navy commander Bernard Skahill from New York City, a prim, neat man with a thin neck that protruded stalk-like from his crisp uniform collar. Skahill was a Naval Academy grad, class of 1921, and to the young officers and men of the amphibious force he seemed positively ancient. The Royal Navy escort for the convoy consisted of one small Flower-class corvette, the *Azalea*—which, at just over 200 feet, was even smaller than an American destroyer escort—

plus the larger but much older destroyer *Scimitar*. The *Azalea* would lead, and the *Scimitar* would screen the convoy's right flank, the likely avenue of approach for any German naval force seeking to interfere with the exercise.

As ships jostled inside Plymouth Harbor just prior to departure, an American landing craft struck the *Scimitar*. The collision left a two-foot hole gouged in the *Scimitar*'s starboard side some 20 feet from the bow. Such collisions were not altogether unusual in a crowded harbor and the damage was not significant, but the commander-in-chief Plymouth, Rear Admiral Sir Ralph Leatham, nevertheless ordered the *Scimitar* into the yards for repair.

Neither Leatham nor the captain of the *Scimitar*, however, notified Commander Skahill, who, after all, was not in the Royal Navy chain of command. Skahill saw the *Scimitar* going in the wrong direction en route to the repair yard, but he assumed this was part of the complicated maneuvering necessary to get all the ships out of port and into formation. As a result, convoy T-4 went to sea that evening with only a single escort—the tiny *Azalea*—and no flank guard.

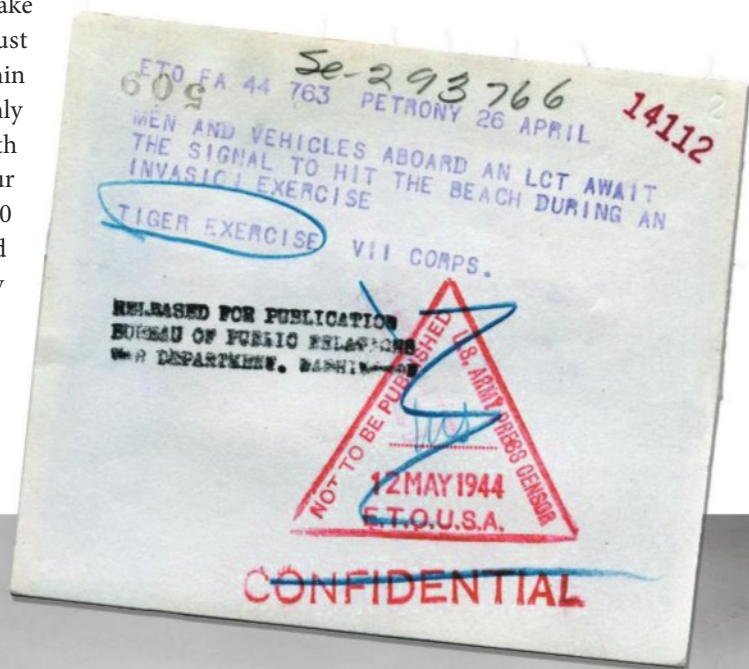
After joining up northeast of Slapton Sands, off a coastal headland called Berry Head, the eight LSTs steamed out into the Channel. The idea was for them to spend as much time at sea as vessels would take to cross the Channel to Normandy, thus emulating the experience of an actual assault.

Excerpted from *Neptune: The Allied Invasion of Europe and the D-Day Landings* by Craig L. Symonds with permission from Oxford University Press, Inc. Copyright © Craig L. Symonds 2014

Several hours after Skahill and the LSTs left Plymouth, at about 10:00 p.m., nine small German warships sortied from Cherbourg. The Allies called them E-boats; the German designation for these craft was *Schnellboot* (S-boat) or fast boat—a particularly apt term. With their 7,500-horsepower Daimler-Benz engines, E-boats could make 40 knots. (See “Blitzkrieg on the High Seas,” July/August 2011.) Built of wood on a light metal alloy frame with a thin sheath of mahogany, they were about 100 feet long (roughly 20 feet longer than an American PT boat), and armed with a 40mm gun, though their principal armament was the four torpedoes they carried amidships that had a range of 7,000 to 8,000 yards—about four miles. The E-boats operated almost exclusively at night, and were painted either gray or in a mottled camouflage pattern that made them very hard to see.

British radar technicians ashore had noted the boats’ sortie from Cherbourg on the night of April 27, but in the dual communications system, no word of it got to Skahill

or to the captain of the *Azalea*, Commander George C. Geddes, Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, until after midnight. The news did, however, concern Admiral Leatham, who realized belatedly that convoy T-4 was at sea with only a single escort. At 1:37 a.m. he dispatched the destroyer HMS *Saladin*,



Navy flagmen at Slapton Sands signal approaching landing craft. Secrecy was a necessary part of practice landings (inset)—and the need for it would grow following late April’s Exercise Tiger.



a sister ship of the damaged *Scimitar*, as a relief escort.

Like the German E-boats, the LSTs of convoy T-4 were running blacked out. They were approaching Lyme Bay at a few minutes past 1 a.m. on April 28 when crewmen and the embarked soldiers on LST 507 heard what one described as “a scraping and dragging noise” under the ship. In hindsight it is evident that this was a German torpedo passing just under the shallow-draft LST. Lieutenant J. S. Swarts, skipper of the 507, sounded General Quarters, though most of the sailors who dutifully headed for their combat stations assumed, quite naturally, that this was simply part of the exercise. Only minutes later, bright green tracer rounds from the E-boats lit up the darkness. Even then, most of the men on board the 507 and the other ships in the convoy assumed this was another, quite realistic, part of the drill.

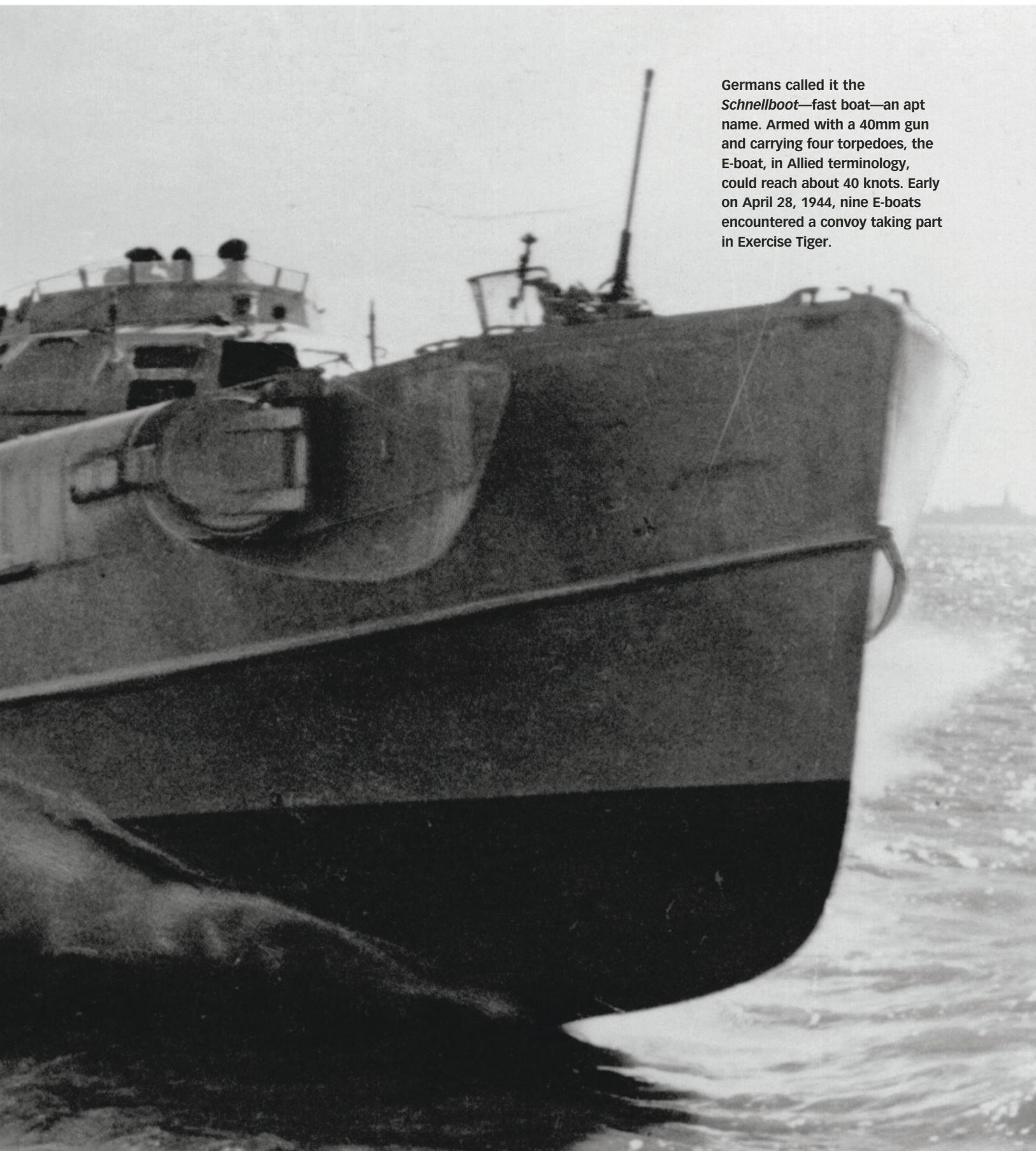
All doubt evaporated at 2:07 a.m. when the first torpedo exploded. It struck the 507 amidships in the auxiliary engine room, knocking out both the ship’s electricity and its communications and starting several fires. The dozens of vehicles on the tank deck had all been topped off with gasoline and as the fires reached them, they burst into flame one by one. The 507 also began taking on water. Because of their large open tank deck, LSTs had no transverse bulkheads or watertight compartments that could be used to limit flooding. The only thing that could be done was to close as many hatches as possible in the hope of controlling the inundation of water.

Meanwhile, the fires produced “a dull roar,” as one sailor recalled, “punctuated by the crackling and sputtering of small-arms ammunition” cooking off. The ship’s doctor, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Gene Eckstam, looked into the tank deck to see “a huge, roaring blast furnace.... Trucks were burning; gasoline was burning; and small-arms ammunition was exploding.” He could hear the screams of men being consumed by the flames, but he knew there was nothing he could do for them; smoke inhalation would soon overcome any who were still alive. “So I closed the hatches into the tank deck and dogged them tightly shut.”

Crowded as the ship was, with nearly 500 soldiers on board as well as more than a hundred crewmen, the men literally got into one another’s way as they reacted to the crisis. They found that the metal pins holding the life rafts to the bulkheads had rusted in place and couldn’t be pried loose. Crewmen tried to lower the Higgins boats alongside, but the LST was listing so badly the hydraulic gear jammed. A soldier used his rifle to shoot the cable holding one Higgins boat, and it finally dropped into the water. Men panicked and began jumping. Soon the sea around the 507 was filled with struggling men, some who could swim, and many who could not.

Eleven minutes after the 507 was struck, a torpedo hit LST 531, followed by another torpedo only seconds later. The result





Germans called it the *Schnellboot*—fast boat—an apt name. Armed with a 40mm gun and carrying four torpedoes, the E-boat, in Allied terminology, could reach about 40 knots. Early on April 28, 1944, nine E-boats encountered a convoy taking part in Exercise Tiger.

was “a gigantic orange ball” of flame, and the 531 began to sink almost at once. Sailors and soldiers simply leaped over the side into the chill water, trusting their life vests. The water was so cold it drove the breath from their bodies. Moreover, the life vests that had been issued to the soldiers proved worse than useless. Unlike the kapok vests that were standard in the U.S. Navy, the soldiers had been issued something that resembled a bicycle inner tube that wrapped around their chests. Most wore them at their waists so they didn’t interfere with their packs. As a result, when men triggered the CO² cartridges and inflated the vests, their heads went underwater.

Those who could cling to one of the small, two-man rafts, which soon became over-crowded. One raft had more than 20 men clinging to it and to each other in concentric circles. As the cold overcame them and they lost consciousness, they let go and drifted into the dark.

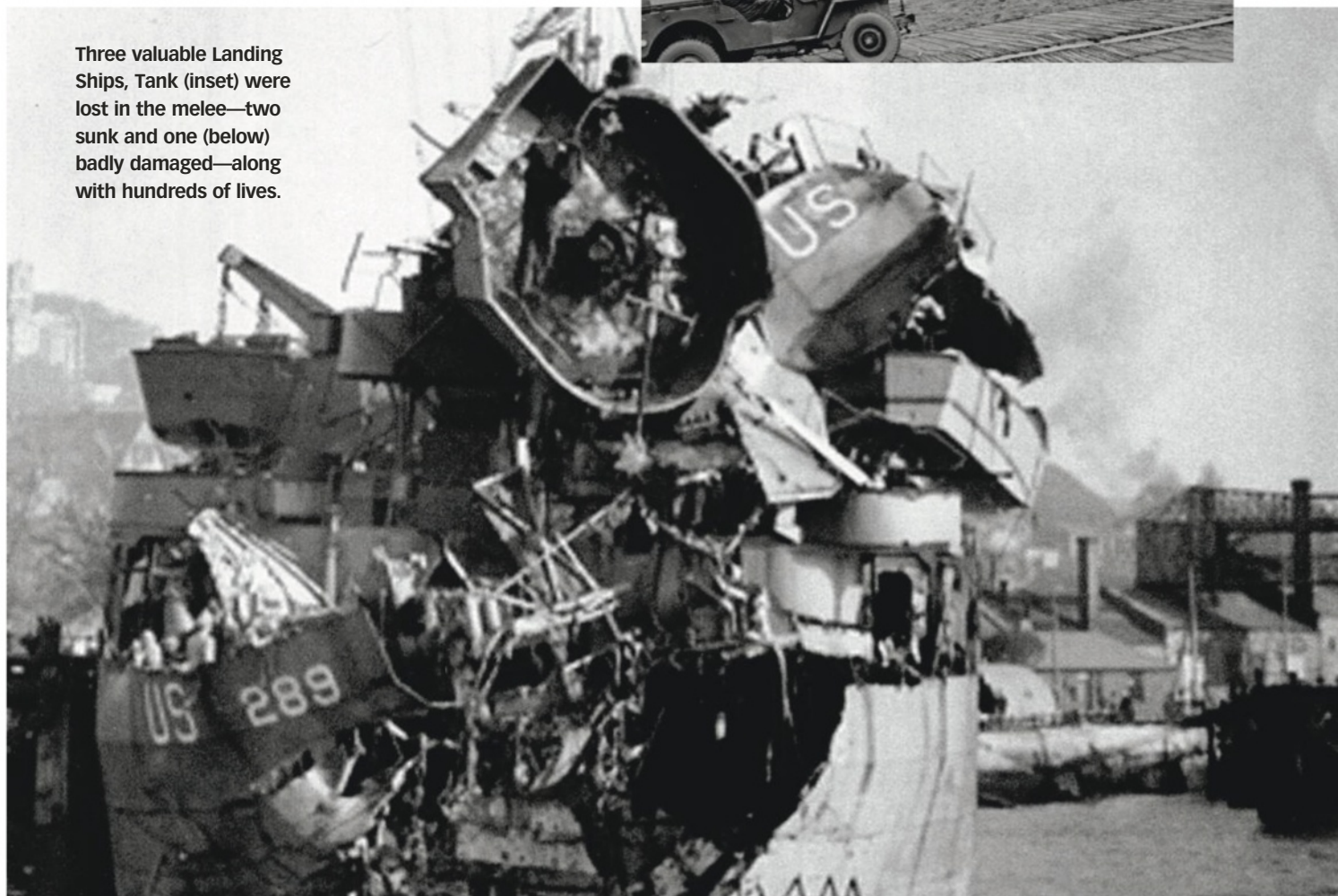
Then LST 289 was hit. The skipper, Lieutenant Henry A. Mettler, saw the torpedo coming and ordered, “Right full rudder.” The maneuver may have saved the ship because the torpedo struck the ship’s stern rather than its broadside. The blast blew off the after section of the 289 containing the crew’s quarters and the galley, while the rest of the ship remained

afloat; in this instance, the fact that LSTs were shaped like bathtubs proved an advantage.

By now both the 507 and 531 were gone. The 507 broke in half, with the bow and stern sections rising up to form what one sailor described as “a fiery jackknife” before they went under. The 531, hit by two torpedoes, went down in only six minutes. Gunners on the remaining LSTs fired at the swift, dark shadows in the night as red (American) and green (German) tracer bullets filled the air. German tracers had



Three valuable Landing Ships, Tank (inset) were lost in the melee—two sunk and one (below) badly damaged—along with hundreds of lives.



a delayed illumination so it was difficult to determine their point of origin, and in the confusion and poor visibility, many of the American shells struck other LSTs.

Commander Geddes, in the *Azalea*, heard the explosions from his position a mile ahead of the convoy and circled back at flank speed. He was reluctant to fire a star shell in order to illuminate the scene, for he knew that it would also expose the LSTs. He did not even know from which direction the attacks had come, or whether the attacker was a U-boat or an E-boat. For his part, Commander Skahill in LST 515 ordered the remaining ships of the convoy to head toward shore. This was the correct and well-established protocol when a convoy came under attack. But the order did not sit well with the captain of Skahill's flagship, Lieutenant John Doyle.

Doyle was much younger than Skahill and he was what was called a "mustang"—that is, a former enlisted man. Thickset, bluff, hearty, and short-necked, he was a bulldog to Skahill's aging greyhound. Doyle objected vociferously to Skahill's decision to turn shoreward while two, and perhaps three, of his ships were sinking. Doyle wanted to go back and pick up the survivors.

Skahill knew that this was not only a violation of standing orders, but also that trying to pick up survivors more often than not resulted in yet another ship being sunk. Doyle didn't care. In an act of near mutiny, he got on the loudspeaker and explained the situation to the men on board. Their shipmates and fellow soldiers were dying out there, he announced. Who wanted to go back to get them? A rousing cheer went up, and Skahill capitulated. The 515 returned to the scene.

It was too late. With the sun coming up, the E-boats had withdrawn, but it had been more than two hours since the first men had gone into the frigid water. Even most of those who could swim, or who had found something to cling to, had lost functionality in their limbs. The *Saladin* arrived to help, and men on Doyle's 515 and on the *Saladin* began retrieving those who were left alive. Most of the bodies in the water, however, were not moving. After rescuing the few survivors, the 515 and the *Saladin* began retrieving the lifeless forms from the water with the intent, no doubt, of giving them a proper burial. Then orders arrived from shore to leave them where they were. There were complaints about that, too, but this time the orders held, and the ships left the scene.

Hours later, crewmen on LCT 271, which was passing through the area en route to Portland Harbor, noted that the sea around them was filled with hundreds of small floating objects. "As we got closer," a sailor recalled, "we noted that they were American GIs." Crewmen used a boat hook to pull one of the bodies alongside. It was a U.S. Army soldier, "in a sort of sitting position with all his clothes on.... His eyes were wide open and staring." He looked, a sailor recalled, like he knew he was going to die. After reporting the discovery, the crew, too, got orders to leave the bodies where they were, and LCT

271 continued on to Portland, though it had to zigzag "to keep from running over the bodies."

The final death toll from Exercise Tiger was 198 sailors and 441 soldiers killed, which was more, as it happened, than would die during the actual landings on Utah Beach five weeks later.

But no one was to know about the slaughter that had occurred in Lyme Bay. The news, after all, would be a crushing blow to morale, and would cast a pall over the other major rehearsal scheduled to take place in only five days. Indeed, if news of the disaster became public, it might even undermine support for the D-Day landings themselves. Certainly the Germans would take increased confidence from knowing how badly the Allies had been hurt. So the decision was made at the very top—very likely by Eisenhower himself—that the incident would remain a secret until after the invasion.

When Skahill, Doyle, and LST 515 arrived in Portland late on the afternoon of April 28, every U.S. Navy ship in the harbor was flying its flag at half-staff. The men assumed that this was because hundreds of sailors and soldiers had just perished in the Channel. It was not. They soon learned that Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox had died earlier that day, and the flags had been lowered in his honor. In an effort to keep news of the debacle in Lyme Bay from spreading, survivors were placed in hospitals. Officially they were under observation, but to some it felt like incarceration. The government informed families of their losses without explaining the circumstance, and until well after the war was over, the incident remained little known. ★



Temporary graves of Exercise Tiger dead fill Brookwood American Cemetery in Surrey, England. After the war, the bodies were reinterred in Cambridge, the U.S., and Normandy.

[BOOKS]

Bringing War Close to Home



THE BURNING SHORE

How Hitler's U-Boats Brought World War II to America

By Ed Offley. 288 pp. Basic, 2014. \$27.99.

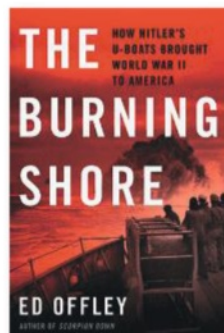
In June 1942, flames leapt into the air and black smoke from the last giant oil tanker in a northbound convoy filled the sky near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, on the United States' mid-Atlantic coast. Swimmers felt the shock wave from the blast before they heard it; bronzed vacationers gathered and watched from the shore. As word quickly spread, thousands more spectators raced to the beach. The extremely capable Horst Degen, commander of U-701, had just struck, bringing the war startlingly close to home for these bystanders. In previous months, the 28-year-old Degen had led

a wolf pack that inflicted serious damage on Britain's lifeline, like others prowling throughout the Atlantic. Indeed, in the first half of 1942, the Third Reich's rampaging U-boats had destroyed more than 350 merchant ships, causing consternation and deep unease among the Allies.

To the daring and resourceful men in German navy commander Admiral Karl Dönitz's underwater fleet, these months were "the happy time"—*der Glückliche Zeit*. For Americans, the period was deadly. Hundreds of merchant sailors lost their lives, often in sight of American shores. Sadly, the U.S. Navy had initially resisted rudimen-

The tanker *Dixie Arrow* sinks off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, after a U-boat torpedo strike in 1942.

tary defenses, like forming coastal shipping into convoys; and although it was now ramping up its technology and training, the navy still had not deployed enough destroyers to combat the U-boat threat in American waters. The worst damage Degen wreaked was in and around the Chesapeake Bay, an under-protected estuary near the nation's capital. The bay proved an ideal hunting ground because of its proximity to deep water, where U-boats



could crash dive and hide.

Degen was a formidable predator. After effectively mining the waters off Virginia's Naval Station Norfolk, he sank three ships on his first patrol. But that was his last success. On July 7, 1942, Lieutenant Harry Kane and his crew, flying a Lockheed Hudson, spotted Degen's boat on the surface. Using the latest antisubmarine techniques and technology, and flying exceedingly low on a bombing run, Kane sank Degen's boat as it tried to dive. For those caught inside, nightmarish minutes followed.

Above, Kane circled, then spotted men in the water. What followed was an act of extraordinary mercy. Slowing the Hudson down to "near-stalling speed," Kane counted about 16 German heads bobbing below, struggling to survive. Kane got on the intercom and ordered his crew to take off their life jackets; these were then dropped to the Germans along with a life raft. "They were beaten," Kane later said of the U-boat survivors. "They couldn't hurt anyone anymore."

It was one of the first sinkings of a German boat in American waters. Degen and some of his men drifted for more than two days at sea before a Coast Guard plane picked them up. Amazingly, not long after, antagonists Kane and Degen met in a navy hospital. More than 40 years later the two reunited again and became firm friends.

The Burning Shore is a fast-paced and expertly drawn account of the 1942 battle for supremacy in the waters along the United States' Eastern seaboard. The book adeptly recaps the tactics and technologies rapidly developing during this crucial phase, but the story's electrifying tale centers on Kane and Degen, two compelling rivals. Throughout, we are reminded of just how close the Allies came to defeat in the toughest chapter of the Battle of the Atlantic. But above all, this is a story of decent men in terrible times. "We couldn't leave them to drown like rats," Kane recalled of Degen and his fellow survivors. "They were like us; they'd a job to do and they'd done it."

—Alex Kershaw

[DVD]

SURVIVING D-DAY

Directed by Richard Dale. 138 minutes.

Airing on the American Heroes Channel; also on DVD, 2012. \$14.98.

Big D-Day anniversaries like this year's 70th inevitably surface new and old videos for an eager market. Sadly, too many recent documentaries recycle overfamiliar footage and substitute hackneyed emotions and data for information and analysis. *Surviving D-Day* is a rare gem among them.

Its vintage footage and you-are-there dramatizations of the action on Omaha Beach drive home the terrifying, disorienting experience of watching almost everything go wrong. Its narrative, buttressed by interviews with experts and Omaha vets from both sides, never loses its historical rigor and attention to detail. The result: a terrible but inclusive portrait of Omaha Beach that vividly depicts the non-stop heroics, screw-ups, and carnage.

Surviving D-Day closely examines the big picture: strategy, tactics, terrain, tides, key hardware, and carefully laid plans gone awry. Take Rommel's hardened defenses—3,700 obstacles, 1,700 landmines, barbed wire, and deadly enfilading fields of fire perforating GIs trying to cross 300 yards to cliffs honeycombed with pillboxes, trenches, and tunnels filled with German defenders. Besides mortars and 88s, they were armed with MG42 machine guns firing 1,500 rounds per minute. Behind all this, Rommel flooded hundreds of square miles of fields to neutralize or kill Allied paratroopers. Scary enough, but he had inadvertent Allied help. Thanks to the thick cloud cover and

fear of hitting GIs, none of the offensive support for Omaha Beach did its job as planned—except for the destroyer USS *Frankford*, which risked sinking to offer fire support while driving off E-boats and picking up survivors. Most of the "amphibious" Sherman tanks, tested only in calm waters, drowned in the choppy Channel. The Rangers' mortar-fired grapnel hooks, their ropes heavily soaked, mostly fell short of Point du Hoc's cliff top. And so on.

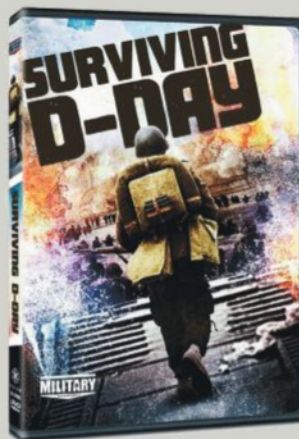
Murder and disaster came pouring from every direction at GIs who survived the brutal landings to get ashore. The dramatized segments use jerky camera movements and ragged editing to effectively put you in stunned

GIs' shoes as buddies drown, get shot, and are blown into pieces, leaving men inexplicably alive and somehow doggedly fighting on. As the casualties swiftly skyrocketed, General Omar Bradley thought Omaha was lost and suspended sending reinforcements. But the Rangers persevered and took Point du Hoc, while on the beach brave men like

the miraculously unwounded General Norman Cota turned the tide, rallying wounded and shell-shocked GIs to attack the bluff's daunting defenses with gritty gallows humor: "Gentlemen, we are being killed on the beaches. Let us go inland and be killed."

Omaha Beach is a harrowing tale of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat. *Surviving D-Day* tells that story with a riveting combination of visceral power and info-rich exposition that makes it essential viewing for this D-Day anniversary.

—Gene Santoro



BOMBING NAZI GERMANY**The Graphic History of the Allied Air Campaign That Defeated Hitler in World War II***By Wayne Vansant. 104 pp. Zenith, 2013. \$19.99.*

For decades, air operations in World War II didn't draw the attention lavished on land and naval actions. That changed over the last few years, and a profusion of worthy works on the bomber offensive, the German economy, and the Luftwaffe's defenses have appeared. Now, thanks to Vietnam veteran and former Marvel Comics artist Wayne Vansant, airpower studies have turned a new corner. Vansant has created a visual narrative of the bombing war that is highly original, striking, engaging, and accessible. It is an outstanding achievement.

Bombing Nazi Germany is concise, but never dumbed down. In fact, it is remarkable how much information this graphic history packs into barely 100 pages. Vansant opens with the vital backstory: a look at strategic bombing's origins in World War I, the airpower visions of Giulio Douhet and Billy Mitchell, and the early years of World War II. He then examines all the major strategy debates: day versus night bombing, oil versus transportation targets, the efficacy of "city busting." His ultimate verdict on the Allied air offensive is balanced and nuanced: while it did not defeat the Third Reich alone, it did grievous damage to German industry and transportation, and paved the way for Allied success on the Continent by eliminating the Luftwaffe.

The book offers a broad perspective on what that success meant. Vansant does not,

for instance, skirt the air war's ugly costs. He addresses Albert Speer's use of slave labor to boost German fighter production as well as the enormous loss of civilian life in firebombed cities (though he does repeat the long-discredited figure of 135,000 dead at Dresden—one of his few errors). An epilogue details the later careers of the major protagonists, and an appendix describes the most significant Allied and German aircraft.

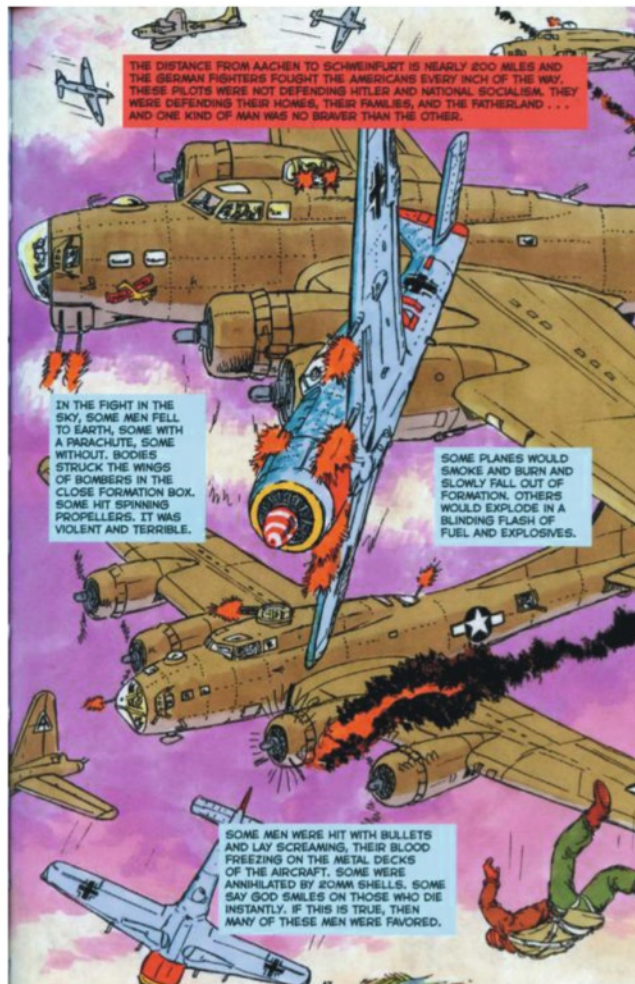
Yet this powerful work's emotional heart clearly lies in its depictions of air combat. All the major events and turning points are here: the night Battle of Berlin, the Hamburg and Dresden firestorms, Ploesti, Big Week. The calamitous October 14,

1943, Schweinfurt raid is especially well depicted—Vansant's six pages of illustrations deliver the impact of dozens of pages of prose. It also serves up vignettes of several Medal of Honor aerial missions, most involving young airmen, many of whom received the distinction posthumously. As to their motivation, P-51 pilot James Howard probably spoke for them all when he noted simply, "I seen my duty and I done it." One small quibble with the otherwise balanced treatment: Vansant might have included a story of an RAF Bomber Command Victoria Cross recipient—especially since there were nearly two dozen.

Any good graphic history has to be visually striking, and Vansant's graphics more than fill the bill. They are not merely "re-draws" of iconic photographs; they are original works of art. Vansant captures the diversity of aircraft types used in waging and defending against the bomber offensive—and they are accurately rendered and sport correct markings. The personalities are particularly well depicted; few readers will fail to recognize Curtis LeMay's fierce, scowling visage or Adolf Galland's dashing profile. In addition, Vansant has a keen artist's eye for capturing the "look" of bomber crews—their cheerful demeanor before the first mission, the tense faces in the briefings, the rituals before takeoff, and the terrors of combat. And he shows things the camera could not, from split-second moments of aerial dueling to the terror-stricken faces of doomed German civilians in an air raid shelter.

Bombing Nazi Germany is so well done—visually stunning, historically accurate, emotionally gripping—that it is bound to lure younger readers and keep them turning the pages. But no air war buff of any age should leave it unexplored.

—Richard R. Muller

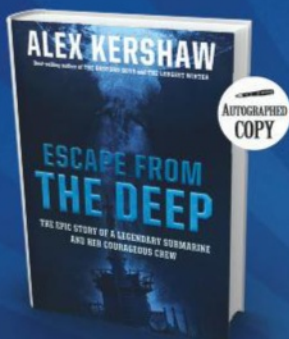


Wayne Vansant depicts the violent firefight at Schweinfurt.

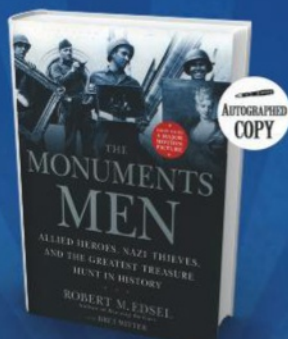
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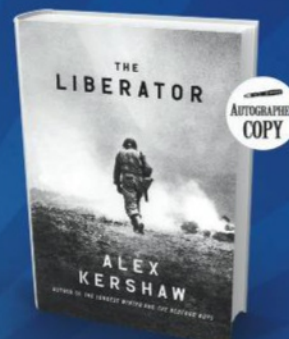
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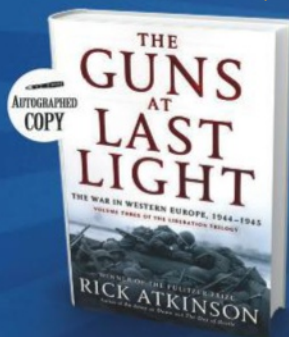
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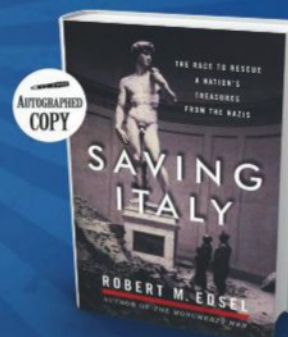
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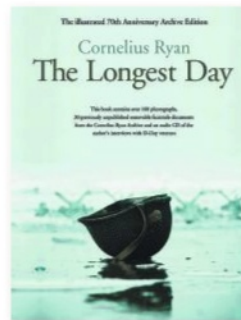
The Longest Day

The Illustrated 70th Anniversary Archive Edition

By Cornelius Ryan. 256 pp. Barrons, 2014. \$59.99.

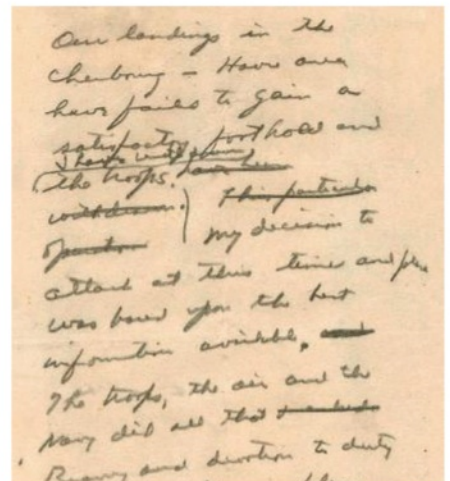
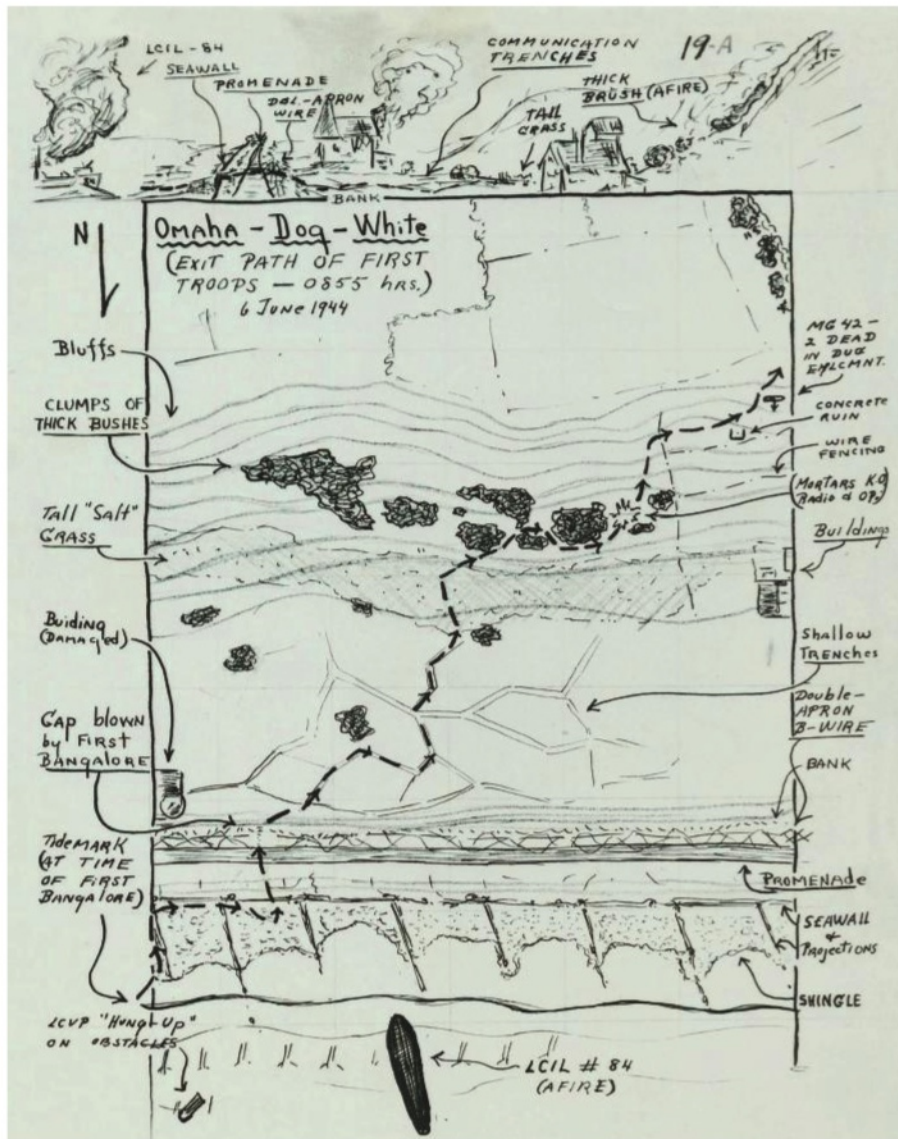
D-Day's most beloved epic retelling has been upscaled as a sumptuous coffee-table book stuffed with memorabilia and handsomely protected by a sturdy slipcase. The full text is here, of course, with a new intro by Cornelius Ryan Archive curator Doug McCabe. But the kick for readers willing to plunk down the cash comes with the extras.

Start with the 120 photos, retouched for clarity and evocative as hell, along with six full-color battle maps. Slip the 30 removable facsimile documents out of bound-in envelopes and peruse previously unpublished historical goodies, which include Rommel's diary entries for the month before the invasion; Eisenhower's famed hand-scrawled note taking responsibility for the invasion's failure; transcripts of interviews with D-Day participants, including the noto-



rious bagpiper who ushered British commandos ashore on Sword Beach; annotated translations of German diaries and phone logs; and Ryan's original book proposal, in which he outlines his new approach to writing war history. Spin the audio CD, which collects Ryan's original interviews with D-Day figures

from Ike on down to GIs on the beaches. Beautiful and informative, this collector's edition lives up to the original work's reputation. —Gene Santoro



Headquarters 1st Infantry Division
APO 1, U. S. Army
G-3 Journal
Appendix Y

June 1944

From 0600L
Time:
To: 2400H
OF Location: TWO ARMS, ENGLISH CHANNEL
N. Coast of France

From	Synopsis	Time	Disposition #
	Arrived in Transport Area at 0630.		
	Dropped anchor at 0651.		
CG	Lead CT 113 at 1/4 unless otherwise directed.		Under CT 114
	1st wave landed 0630	0630	2
	2d wave landed 0636	0636	2
	16 LVT and 116 LVT touched down 0630.	0630	2
Thiller	In 1 DCMG No one waterborne		V Corps & J
Thiller	In 3 DCMG landed the early LVT returning.		V Corps & J
POSB	1st First wave foundered.		1st & J
Terrell	12th unit is landing half on DCMG half on 0630.		1st & J

A map General Norman Cota gave to *The Longest Day* author Cornelius Ryan (left), Eisenhower's draft taking responsibility for the invasion's possible failure (top), and a minute-by-minute D-Day observation report (bottom).

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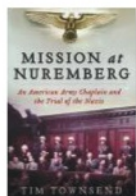
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[BOOK BRIEFS]

FIGHTING FOX COMPANY

The Battling Flank of the Band of Brothers
By Bill Brown and Terry Poyser. 344 pp.
Casemate, 2014. \$32.95.

Everybody knows Easy Company. But until now, few knew Fox. This tick-tock account is beefed up with first-person reminiscences about events and exploits from D-Day and from Holland to Bastogne that are chunked into the narrative à la a video documentary.



MISSION AT NUREMBERG

An American Army Chaplain and the Trial of the Nazis

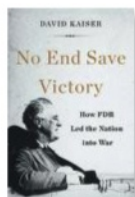
By Tim Townsend. 400 pp.
William Morrow, 2014. \$28.99.

An offbeat angle on top Nazis awaiting trial and sentencing, this story focuses on the mild-mannered, 50-something Lutheran pastor chosen to minister to them. Recaps of larger events sometimes slow the pace, but there are unexpected insights for those who exercise patience.

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN

Explaining the Holocaust

By Dan McMillan. 304 pp. Basic, 2014. \$27.99.
McMillan focuses on a "perfect storm" of historical circumstances, from World War I's slaughter to Hitler's almost accidental ascent to power. Taken together, he says, these allowed Germans to accept Nazi genocidal policies as "normal."



NO END SAVE VICTORY

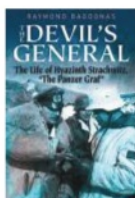
How FDR Led the Nation into War

By David Kaiser. 320 pp.
Basic, 2014. \$27.99.
A reasonably good retelling of how Roosevelt adroitly maneuvered his reluctant nation into confronting a global war.

HITLER'S GENERALS IN AMERICA

Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence
By Derek R. Mallett. 264 pp. Kentucky, 2013. \$35.

The British treated captured German generals with shared class-conscious deference; Americans questioned them, then tossed them into dusty POW camps in the United States. But as the war's end neared and uneasy Soviet-American relations chilled, American intelligence suddenly saw their prisoners as valuable assets.



THE DEVIL'S GENERAL

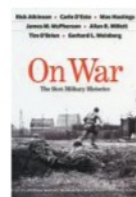
The Life of Hyazinth Strachwitz, "The Panzer Graf"

By Raymond Bagdonas. 376 pp. Casemate, 2014. \$32.95.
Despite his fanciful first name, this Silesian nobleman's little-known career is a suggestive one-man slice of World War II, the Freikorps, and the Eastern Front, where the Soviets learned to fear his tank commands.

A WORLD WITHOUT JEWS

The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide

By Alon Confino. 304 pp. Yale, 2014. \$30.
How did the Nazis change German culture so drastically that Germans learned to ignore or accept the disappearance of millions of Jewish friends and neighbors? One answer, the author asserts, is that the National Socialists embedded their race hatred within Christianity's ancient anti-Semitic traditions and symbolism.



ON WAR

The Best Military Histories

By Rick Atkinson, Carlo D'Este, Gerhard Weinberg, et al. 264 pp. Pritzker Military Museum and Library, 2013. \$27.

Three of the seven essays collected here deal brilliantly with World War II; the others, equally brilliant, are well worth reading.

NAZIS, ISLAMISTS, AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

By Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz. 360 pp. Yale, 2014. \$35.

The odd-couple marriage between Nazis and Arab nationalists has come under increasingly revealing scrutiny over the last decade. Here, fresh research from previously unexamined archives explicitly ties that frightening nexus to today's Middle East.

—Gene Santoro

[KID STUFF]

D-DAY 1944

By Amber Books. Available on iTunes, \$0.99; Android, \$1.99.

Think of this as an interactive e-book introducing the invasion of Normandy to kids. (It's not marketed that way, but it's pitched below what most adults would want and expect.) As usual with this format, there are a few ways to deal with the material. Start with the in-depth text descriptions, and let the audio commentary guide you through the battle. Or reenact the fighting step

by step. Kid-friendly animated sequences are basic but good enough keep the young 'uns plugged in. Images and info about the troops and their materiel stay comfortably pitched at the middle-school level. A moderately effective, relatively inexpensive D-Day primer for preteens.

—Gene Santoro



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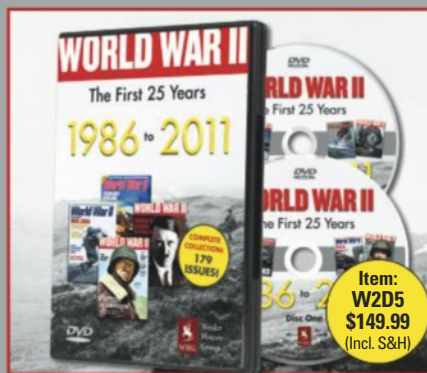
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Casablanca and the Politics of Sacrifice

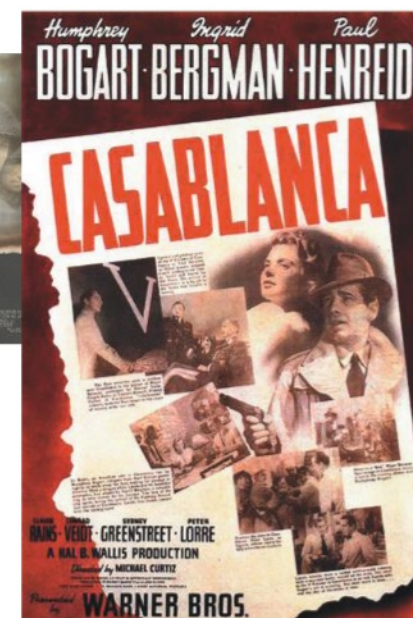
By Mark Grimsley



The first time I saw *Casablanca* I was 20 years old, with a date on my arm and hope in my heart. Unsurprisingly, I watched it through the lens of romance. So too, for at least the first five viewings, should anyone watch this most beloved of American films. The journey of its central character, Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart), from a deep bitterness about love at the beginning of *Casablanca* to a noble sacrifice of love at its end, is one of the most compelling plots in the history of cinema. But after that, it is permissible to reflect on *Casablanca*'s political content, as film critics have been doing for more than 70 years.

If you have never seen *Casablanca*, then stop reading this column and get hold of the DVD, and return after you've watched it. The rest of us may reflect on the film as it would have appeared to moviegoers during its initial run. *Casablanca* debuted at New York's Hollywood Theater on Thanksgiving Day 1942, not quite a year after the United States entered World War II. By February 1943 the film was playing in more than 200 moviehouses across the country.

At one level, of course, *Casablanca* is indeed an extraordinary romance. It centers on Rick's Café Américain, whose clientele comes to drink, gamble, and attempt to buy and sell escape from Casablanca, in French Morocco, to Lisbon, in neutral Portugal, and departure to freedom in the New World. French Morocco is under the control of Vichy France, the authoritarian, pro-Ger-



***Casablanca* casts the argument for interventionism in romantic terms.**

man rump state established in 1940 after France signed a humiliating armistice with Germany. Rick himself is hardened and bitter. It transpires that he came to Casablanca from Paris, where he loved and lost the beautiful Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman). Ilsa suddenly appears in the company of her seeming new lover, resistance leader Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid). "Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world," Rick later glooms in a fog of liquor, "she walks into mine."

Laszlo is among those trying to escape to Lisbon, closely pursued by the menacing Nazi Major Heinrich Strasser (Conrad Veidt). In *Casablanca*, Laszlo enjoys a fragile safety, thanks to Vichy's jurisdiction. But Vichy is virtually a German satellite, and sooner or later Strasser will find a way to seize him. Laszlo is saved only because Rick ultimately decides to discard his cynicism and, in an intricately planned gambit, ensure Laszlo's escape.

Few could miss *Casablanca*'s references to prewar American foreign policy. Early in the film, Rick rebuffs an overture by the black marketeer Ferrari (Sydney

Greenstreet) to go into business together. "My dear Rick," Ferrari chides the café owner. "When will you realize that in this world today isolationism is no longer a practical policy?" The Vichy police prefect Captain Louis Renault (Claude Rains) warns Rick not to intervene on behalf of the weasel-like Ugarte (Peter Lorre), suspected of murdering two German couriers carrying letters of transit priceless to anyone seeking to flee Casablanca.

"I stick my neck out for nobody," Rick responds.

"A wise foreign policy," Renault says.

Based upon those lines in the film, and its overall trajectory, some have theorized that Warner Brothers intended *Casablanca* as an argument in favor of American intervention in the war. But that is an untenable interpretation. Filming only began in May 1942, five months after Pearl Harbor, and when the cameras started rolling the script was still far from being complete.

Working at white heat—screenwriter Howard Koch remembered feeling that "the camera was a monster devouring my pages faster than I could write them"—the writers scarcely had the time to craft a subtle propaganda film. And director Michael Curtiz scarcely had the intention: he simply wanted to make a love story.

But as an affirmation of America's goal in going to war, which was nothing less than to save the world from evil, *Casablanca* had real power. The film establishes early on that Rick once waged his own war against evil, running guns

into Ethiopia and fighting in the Spanish Civil War, acts redolent of America's intervention against Imperial Germany in World War I. But then, as the United States had after the Armistice, Rick retreated into a disillusioned isolationism: "I stick my neck out for nobody."

Yet despite Rick's initial refusal to facilitate Laszlo's attempt to escape Strasser by flying to Lisbon with Ilsa—who turns out to be Laszlo's wife—by the end of the film Rick has done exactly that, notwithstanding the fact that in doing so he is giving up Ilsa, the great love of his life.

"Welcome back to the fight," Laszlo says. "This time I know our side will win."

To protect Laszlo and Ilsa from being captured before their flight can lift off, Rick shoots Strasser. Then, with the plane safely aloft, Rick—joined by Renault, who has also recovered his idealism—walks off into the night to make his way to the Free French garrison at Brazzaville. "Louis,"



Rick's arc carries him out of isolationism to intervention and redemption—at the cost of the great love of his life.

Rick says, in one of cinema's great lines, "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." The arc of the film, then, is an unmistakable journey from isolationism to intervention.

But audiences would also have viewed *Casablanca* in more personal terms. After explaining to Ilsa why he has decided that she should leave with Laszlo rather than remain with him, Rick continues, "I'm no good at being noble, but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world."

Like Rick, millions of Americans were making sacrifices on behalf of the greater good, either by leaving loved ones to go to war or by watching loved ones depart. And if by horrible chance the loved ones failed to reunite, then, like Rick, they could console themselves with their own equivalent of Rick's declaration to Ilsa: "We'll always have Paris."

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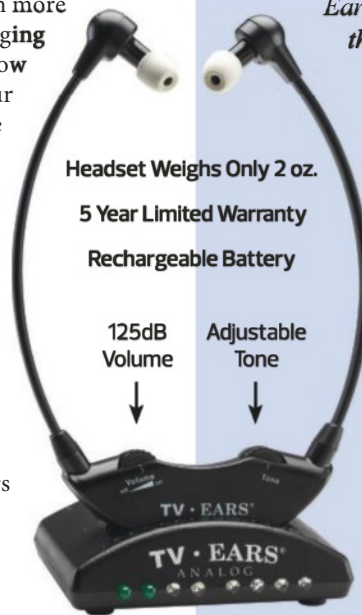
Doctor Recommended TV Ears has helped millions of people with hearing loss hear the television clearly without turning up the volume! With TV Ears wireless technology, you set your own headset volume and tone, while family members set the television volume to a pleasant level or mute the volume altogether. Imagine watching television with your family again and hearing every word clearly... as thousands of our customers have said, "TV Ears has changed our lives!"

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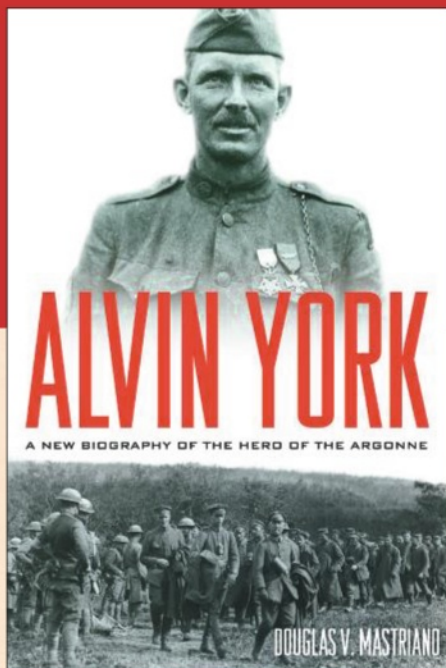
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Challenge

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to the January/
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the...?!?**

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60 launch tubes

**Hollywood Howlers**

The wartime navy was
highly segregated; a black
man would not be assigned to
a gun

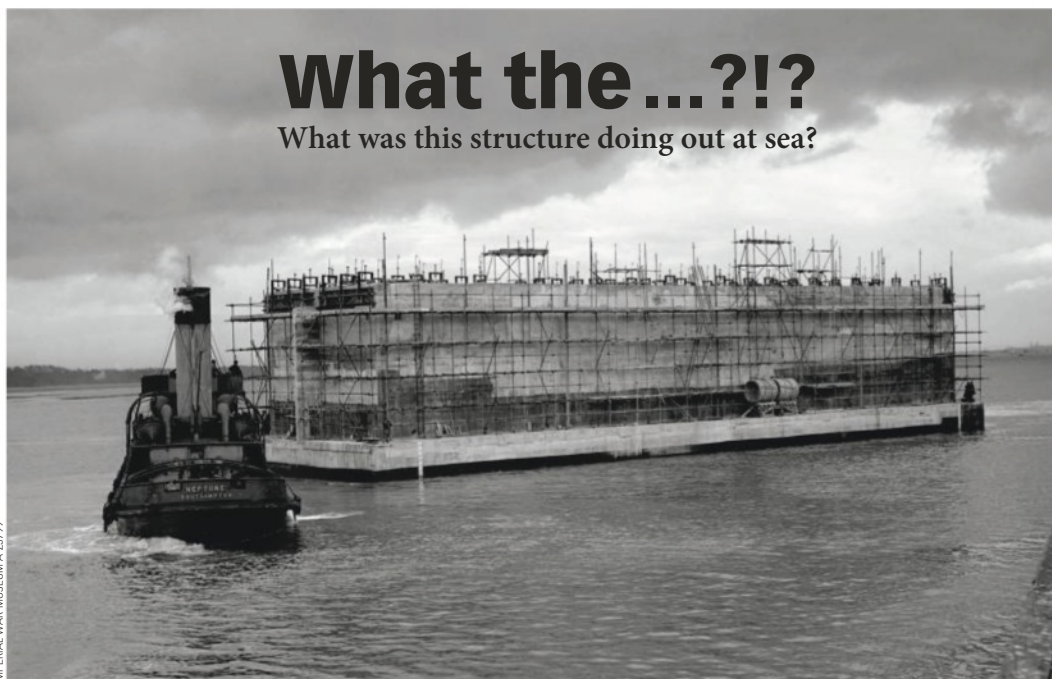
**Name That Patch**

615th Squadron,
401st Bomb Group

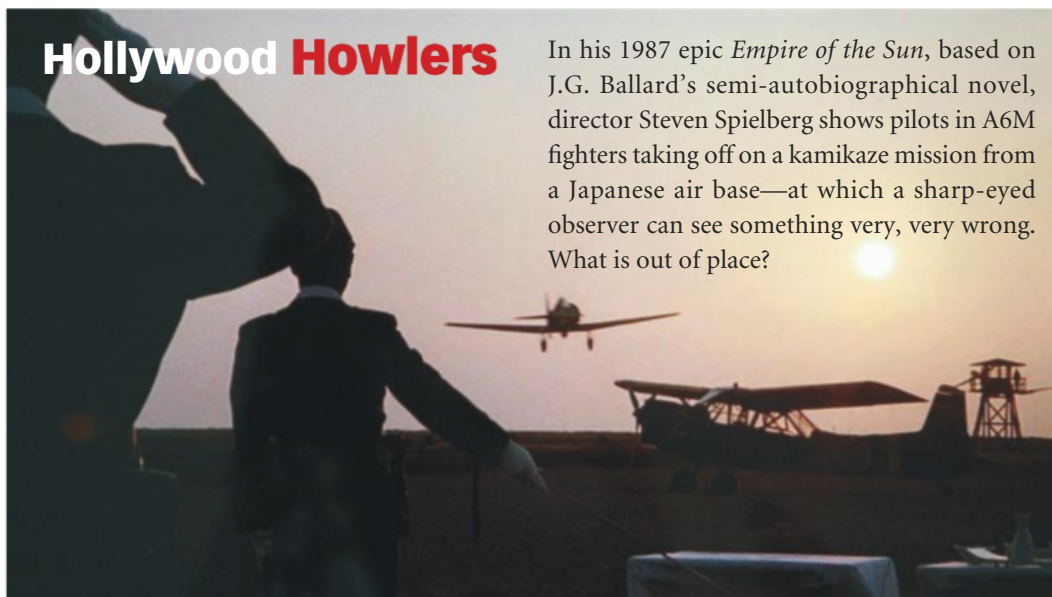
**Congratulations
to the winners:**

Gilbert Garza,
Steve Robillard, and
David Miller

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**Hollywood Howlers**

In his 1987 epic *Empire of the Sun*, based on J.G. Ballard's semi-autobiographical novel, director Steven Spielberg shows pilots in A6M fighters taking off on a kamikaze mission from a Japanese air base—at which a sharp-eyed observer can see something very, very wrong. What is out of place?



WARNER BROS. PICTURES, PATCH, WEIDER ARCHIVES

Name That Patch
Which unit wore this emblem?**Please send your answers**

to *all three* questions, and your mailing address, to:

May/June Challenge
World War II
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Leesburg, VA 20176

or e-mail:
challenge@weiderhistorygroup.com

One winner, chosen at random from all correct entries submitted by June 15, will receive a copy of *The Longest Day: The Illustrated 70th Anniversary Archive Edition* by Cornelius Ryan. Answers will appear in the September/October 2014 issue.

TOP: NATIONAL ARCHIVES; MIDDLE, WARNER BROS./FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE; BOTTOM: WEIDER ARCHIVES

Glamour Girl

Actress **Anne Baxter** appeared in a series of patriotic films during the war years, won an Oscar for the 1946 film *The Razor's Edge*, and is best remembered for her role as the title character in *All About Eve* (1950). She came from an affluent family and had a famous relative: architect Frank Lloyd Wright was her grandfather. "And so she was very sophisticated and very 'Have you read the latest Christopher Fry?'"—an English poet and playwright—fellow actress Celeste Holm somewhat cattily noted. Baxter's famous grandfather had a dim view of how Hollywood was treating his granddaughter. Calling her a "nice girl," he thought her studio was "wasting a good actress to make a, well, fairly nice glamour girl."



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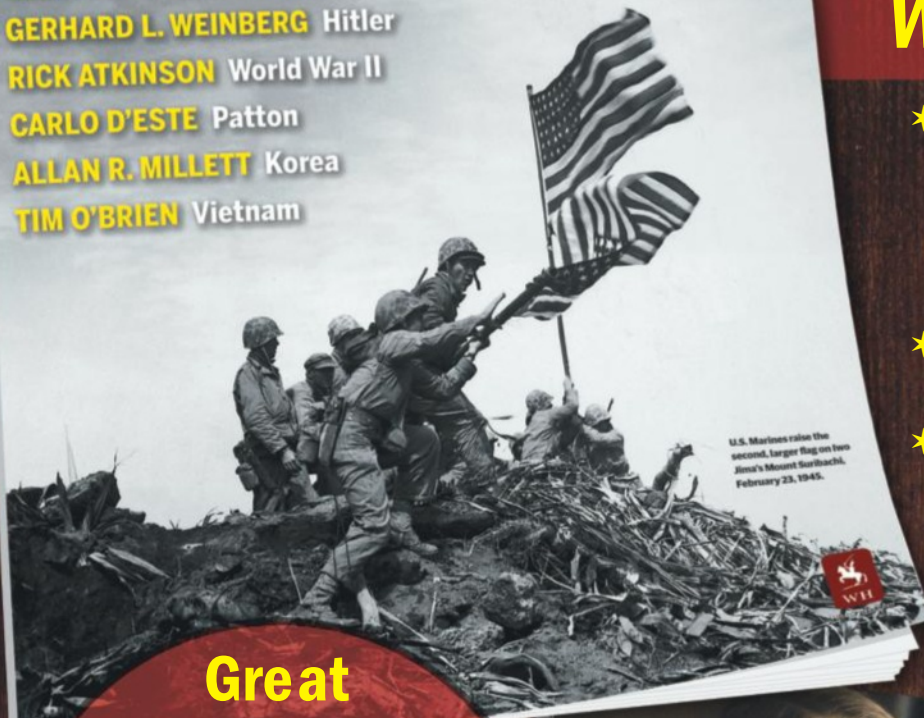
GERHARD L. WEINBERG Hitler

RICK ATKINSON World War II

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U.S. Marines raise the second, larger flag on two Iwo's Mount Suribachi, February 23, 1945.

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